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THE MAHADEV KOLIS  
(A Scheduled Tribe)





A 'bhagat' at Sakirwadi fair with the pot of live fire charcoal  
on his head.

# THE MAHADEV KOLIS

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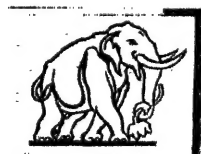
G. S. CHURYE

*Professor Emeritus of Sociology  
University of Bombay*

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## PREFACE

This Study was undertaken at the instance of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay. The University of Bombay was asked for a plan of study of the tribal people of the State and I submitted a comprehensive and continuous scheme. After about a year it was finally decided by the Department of Education that I should conduct a study of only one tribe. Having named the Mahadev Kolis as my first subject, I was asked to proceed.

Dr. L. N. Chapekar was appointed Research Officer and he worked in that capacity till December 1956. Part of the time he was helped and his work supplemented by Dr. A. J. Agarkar. Almost all the photographic work is his.

By December 1956, the money provided by the Government for the work got so exhausted that an amount barely sufficient for printing the study remained. I had to draw upon the slender personnel of my Department for help in writing up the account, preparing the manuscript and seeing it through the press. My thanks are due to these departmental helpers.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not record my deep sense of gratitude to a number of Mahadev Koli and other helpers who placed their voluntary services at the disposal of Dr. Chapekar and Dr. Agarkar. Chief among them stand Shri N. T. Metkar and Jagle Guruji of Jamsar, Shri Govindrao Sable of Nimgiri, Mahadev Vitthal Sable Guruji of Ghodegaon, Shri Nanasaheb Sable of Ambegaon, the three leading Mondhes, Narayan, Ganpat and Arjun of Devargaon, Shri R. V. Patankar from Rajur, Bhaurao Rongte Guruji of Manik Ozar, and Shri Lakshmanrao Bande and Punaji Dhindhale from Mulund.

If the study proves useful to the Government of Bombay, the prime mover of this work, and if it should lead to some betterment of my Mahadev Koli friends I will feel amply rewarded for my pains.

G. S. GHURYE

University Department of Sociology  
Bombay, 3-3-1957



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*Plate 1*



General view of a Mahadev Koli  
'Wadi'

*Plate 2*



Thatched huts



*Plate 3*



Threshing of 'nagli' at  
Devargaon

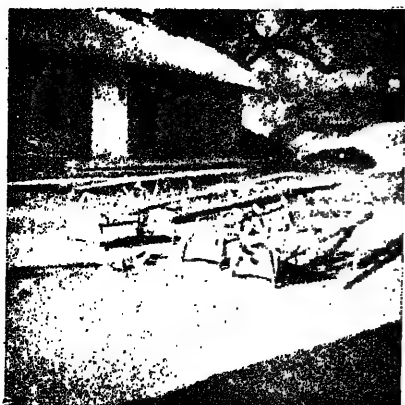
*Plate 4*



Women selling milk at  
Trimbakeshwar



*Plate 5*



Sedan chairs at  
Trimbakeshwar

*Plate 6*



The house at Trimbakeshwar pro-  
posed to be turned into a 'Mahadev  
Koli dharmashala.'



*Plate 7*



Worship of Maruti at Ningiri

*Plate 8*



Bhajan party at Ningiri

*Plate 9*



Women of Ningiri stringing 'Chapha' flowers

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A band of Mahar Musicians from Ningiri

*Plate 11*



A newly-wed wife from Mulund in her kitchen

*Plate 12*



Women of Nimgiri extinguishing the Holi fire



"Song" of a horseman in the Shimga festival at Nimgiri

*Plate 14*



'Tamasha' troupe of Ningiri presenting a song

*Plate 15*



'Tamasha' troupe of Ningiri presenting a 'Vag'



'Lezim' - players of Rajur, Dist. Poona  
(moving in a circle)



'Lezim' - players of Rajur, Dist. Poona  
(Playing to the accompaniment of a full band of Music)



'Lezim' - players of Rajur, Dist. Poona  
(sitting posture)

Plate 19



A group of wrestlers from Nimgiri

## THE BACKGROUND

KOLIS are perhaps the largest and the most well-known of the non-Brahmanic non-dominant ethnic groups in Bombay State. In 1891 they numbered about twenty-one lakhs.<sup>1</sup> They are found spread over from Saurashtra, through Guparat down the coast through Thana and Kolaba districts and over the Ghats through Khandesh, Nasik, Ahmednagar, to the southern and western talukas of the Poona district. In Maharashtra, Koli *par excellence* means a fisherman. In the Gujarati-speaking region of the State, however, it has no such connotation.

The overall designation of Koli, applied to a number of communities, only serves to disguise the variety of occupations and the different stages of cultural development which are met with in the different communities making up the group. This fact of cultural differentiation is reflected in the various names of the component communities current amongst themselves and their immediate neighbours. Thus in the Gujarati region we have two great constituents of the Koli ethnic group named Talabda Koli and Chunvalia Koli.<sup>2</sup> The Chunvalia Koli is better known as an agricultural labourer and also as a dangerous character. And the Kolis who figured as the objects of punitive military measures of the British in the first quarter of the nineteenth century<sup>3</sup> must have been the Chunvalia Kolis and not the very much more settled agriculturist section. The Talabda Koli, on the other hand, is a confirmed agriculturist and in some parts almost the superior agriculturist. And he has so far advanced on the cultural ladder that he has nearly shed his design-

1. *Census of India*, 1891, Vol. VIII, pt. 2, p. 178.

2. (i) B. L. Mankad, *A Sociological Study of the Kolis in Kathiawar*, the *Journal of the University of Bombay*, Vol. IX, pt. 1, p. 227;

(ii) *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. VIII (Kathiawar), p. 140;

(iii) *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IX (Gujarat Population), pt. 1, p. 239.

3. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. VII (Baroda), p. 212; Vol. IX, pt. 1, p. 240.



nation of Koli which, whenever it appears as a tag, forms a suffix.<sup>4</sup>

In Maharashtra, though Koli in general means a fisherman, it is the Son Koli who is almost exclusively the fisherman Koli with the Vaitee Koli and the Mangela Koli bringing up the rear. The Malhar Koli, on the other hand, is today at least, and for a few centuries past has been, pre-eminently a water-carrier in the more arid areas of the region. Perhaps in the early past he might have been in part at least the keeper of forts. The Koli that figures among the twelve standard 'balutas' or the traditional village officials in the Deccan, is the water-carrier.<sup>5</sup> He is so identified with water-carrying that he is popularly not only known as the Panbhare Koli, because he 'fills' or brings water, but also as the Chumbale Koli because, in discharging his function as a water-carrier, he uses a cloth-pad ('Chumbal') on his head.

The Mahadev Kolis, as their full appellation indicates, have been known to Maharashtra after their region of concentration rather than by any occupational activity. It provides a clue to their history and migration. The present concentration of the Mahadev Kolis is such that one would *a priori* associate them with Bhimashankar, Kalsubai and Trimbak, the high peaks of the Sahyadri in Poona, Ahmednagar and Nasik districts. An early student of this community, Capt. Mackintosh has recorded his opinion that the Mahadev Kolis precipitated to their present area from the Mahadev Hills,<sup>6</sup> which being situated in the north-west of Berar were naturally described to be in Hyderabad State of which that area then formed part.

The original habitat of the Mahadev Kolis and their dispersal in specific localities are not ascertained at this stage. Though S. S. Ul Hassan writing in 1920 has described the Mahadev Kolis as a tribe found in the Hyderabad State, even when Berar no longer formed a part of that State, repeated enquiries of the District Officers and the Backward Class Officer, too, of Parbhani and Aurangabad vouchsafed the information

4. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IX, pt. 1, p. 244.

*Census of India*, 1911, Vol. VII, pt. 1 (Bombay Report), p. 275.

5. *Diaries of the Peshwas, Shahu Chhatrapati*, p. 176.

6. *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, Vol. 1, p. 236.

that there are no Mahadev Kolis in that area. On the other hand, very painstaking enquiries, in Akola taluka of Ahmednagar district, of the Mahadev Kolis and others elicited the tradition strongly current among them that not only the Mahadev Kolis of Ahmednagar district but also those of the still northern district of Nasik had arrived there from Junnar in Poona and still look back to it as their place of origin. Consonant with this tradition is the historical fact recorded in the middle of the fourteenth century that the Sarnaik or the head captain of the Mahadev Kolis, who were spread over 'fifty-two valleys', or 'Bavan-Mavals', each with its own Naik or Captain, was stationed at Junnar.<sup>7</sup> According to the same historical source the last Sarnaik of the Mahadev Kolis was Muhammad Latif, about 1670.

It is possible that Junnar was fixed upon as the headquarters by the Bahamani Kings for the Sarnaik, their nominee, and the current tradition of the Mahadev Kolis might be a reflection of that fact rather than a reality of ethnic history. This suggestion is supported by the fact that many of the most sacred and beloved places associated with their traditional connection with Valmiki and Rama, are located in Ahmednagar and Nasik districts, and not in Poona. Therefore, I am inclined to conclude that the early investigators were unable to clearly distinguish the Mahadev Kolis from the other Kolis. Russell and Hiralal<sup>8</sup> have stated that in Vidarbha (Berar) the principal group of Kolis is that of Mahadev Kolis and that they are divided into two sections, 'Bhas' or pure and 'Akramase' or impure. Two or three different approaches made by me to ascertain the present position led to the information that there are no Mahadev Kolis at least in Chikhli taluka which was supposed to be their strong-hold. I must also mention here the fact that even within Bombay State there is a serious discrepancy discovered between the census data available at the taluka headquarters and the information gathered on the spot. In Sindkheda taluka of Khandesh district the figures for which were kindly supplied

7. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XVIII (Poona), pt. II, p. 218.

Mackintosh, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 238.

8. *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, Vol. III, p. 534 ff.

to me by the Mamlatdar from the National Register of Citizens a large number of Mahadev Kolis are shown. But Dr. A. J. Agarkar whom I specially sent there, after spending a good deal of time in contacting various people, came away fully satisfied that most of them were Suryavansi Kolis and hardly any Mahadev Kolis. The Mahadev Kolis of the five districts of Poona, Ahmednagar, Nasik, Thana and Kolaba have rarely any matrimonial alliance outside their five districts and when they have one, it is only with a Mahadev Koli family which has migrated there from one of the above districts.

While tracing the distribution and studying the numbers of the Mahadev Kolis, one must fully bear in mind the following two tendencies. First, people persistently return themselves as mere Kolis without further specification. Second, many sections of Kolis describe themselves as Mahadev Kolis in order to be able to claim the special benefits of the Scheduled Tribes. The first is exemplified in the official data from Nasik and other places and the other in those from Khandesh; and both of them in the personal experiences of Drs. Agarkar and Chapekar. The Collector of Nasik after a careful scrutiny informed me that the returns in the National Register of Citizens at Nasik showed a large number of entries as Kolis only. This tendency for the loose use of the overall term Koli explains, though not wholly, the tremendous vagaries seen in the Census figures<sup>9</sup> for Mahadev Kolis whether district-wise or for the whole State from 1891 to 1931. Thus for example, increase in their number for Bombay State between 1891 and 1921 by more than 200 per cent and between 1891 and 1931 by about 190 per cent, or in that of Thana district the decrease between 1891 and 1921 of more than 300 per cent is explained by this tendency having been an old one. But I am not sure that it is this tendency alone which explains, or can explain, the decrease of about 25 per cent among Kolis of Nasik district between 1921 and 1931, or the decrease of more than 50 per cent in their numbers in Thana District between 1891 and 1931, or again even their increase by about 30 per cent in Jawhar between 1891 and 1931.

The total unreliability of the figures of the numbers of the

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9. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. VIII, pt. 2, pp. 444-45.

Mahadev Kolis will be fully appreciated if the reader knows that, according to the information recorded in the Census of 1931, the operations of which were headed by one who was not only a very senior civilian but was considered to be a leading ethnographer in India, there were not less than 36,000 Mahadev Kolis in Sindh of whom more than 25,000 were concentrated in Thar and Parkar district.<sup>10</sup> The compiler of the *Gazetteer of the Province of Sindh* in 1907 returned the information that in 1901 there were more than 32,000 Kolis in Sindh but did not describe them as Mamadev Kolis. Instead, he regarded them as the members of "a great and ancient race which is now chiefly settled in Gujarat." He doubted their own legends tracing them from the Meds of Sindh and stressed their Rajput connection.<sup>11</sup>

Leaving out the Sindh Kolis from the number of Mahadev Kolis recorded in the Census of 1931 for Bombay Presidency including States and Agencies, there were a little over 1,10,000 of them. In 1891 they were a little more than 53,000. Thus in forty years they would appear to have nearly doubled themselves.

The mention of Sindh Kolis leads one to think about the distribution of Kolis and their affinities if any with more or less similar groups outside the Bombay State. I shall begin this brief discussion with the observation of the Census Superintendent of Bombay for 1931 that Koli becomes Kori in Sindh and that some think Koris, who have no connection with weaving, are aboriginal. He further opines, without discarding this suggestion, that they might have migrated to Sindh through the Panjab from the north and north-east. In support of his contention he points out that there are Hindu Koris in the Nara valley. In the south-east Panjab those Chamars who have taken to weaving are called Kolis. According to Baines, however, Koli "is a general term for the menial classes, amongst whom most of the artisans are included."<sup>12</sup>

Though Kori in Sindh might have nothing to do with

10. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. VIII, pt. 2, p. 424.

11. *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind* (1907), p. 185.

12. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. VIII, pt. 1, p. 572; Baines, *Ethnography*, p. 53.

weaving, Koris or Koiris are known over a large part of Northern India.<sup>14</sup> I donot know that any responsible student of Indian ethnography has suggested an ethnic connection between Kori and Koli. And I myself do not think that there is any. If it is only the sound of the names that should lead to postulate any ethnic connection, then the Korwas and the Korkus, at least the former, have a better claim to relationship with the Koris. But the Korwa, the Kharia and the Korku are by common consent, assigned to the Kol or the Kolarian ethnic stock.<sup>15</sup> And some of the older writers at least have suggested an ethnic connection between the great Kol tribe and the Kolis of the Bombay State.<sup>16</sup> For me it is very hard to believe such a connection. It is the characteristic of the Kolarian stock that if any of its component ethnic groups is not very much broken up and mixed with others, it tends to preserve its language. The Korkus are an instance in point.<sup>16</sup> Though a small community and far flung from its original stock somewhere in the eastern parts of Chota Nagpur it has in its mountain fastnesses retained the Kolarian tongue. Kolis of Bombay, however, do not show the slightest trace of Kolarian tongue in their languages.

I should not leave this topic of the ethnic affinities of Kolis outside Bombay State without pointing out that nobody has ever suggested, or can suggest, their affinities with ethnic groups located to their south and south-east. Second, the nearest verbal equivalent of their name Koliya represents an old and fairly respectable tribe, located near the Nepalese Terai as the neighbours of the still more respectable Sakya tribe. In Pali literature, where alone these Koliyas are mentioned, their name is suggested to have had some connection with the tree called *Kola*.<sup>17</sup>

In the present state of our knowledge we have to take the Kolis of Bombay State by themselves without trying to trace relationship if any the Kolis of Gujarat have with the Kolis of their supposed wanderings. Within the overall Koli group what

13. Baines, *Ethnography*, p. 63.

14. Baines, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

15. Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, p. 551.

16. Baines, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

17. G. P. Malalasekara, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, Vol. I, pp. 689-90.

Maharashtra cannot be ascertained without a thorough and comparative study of all the Koli communities. Writing about the various Koli communities of Maharashtra, I have to begin by mentioning that older authorities like John Wilson, who wrote at the end of the third quarter of the nineteenth century, considered all the different component sectional communities I have mentioned earlier as occupational varieties of the overall Koli community. So much is this the case that he opined that the community whom all know as the Agris today, were Agri Kolis. He says, "They get their name from the Sanskrit 'akara' (a mine) which in Marathi, however, has much signification of the Latin *ager* a field."<sup>18</sup> In short, he implied that these Kolis were called Agri Kolis because they produced salt by working in a salt-pan. In no other source are we vouchsafed the information that the Agri were ever called the Agri Kolis.<sup>19</sup>

However it may be with the Agris, the Panbhare of Malhar Kolis, like the Mahadev Kolis, were keepers of forts in former times, though not so well-known and were without a reigning or noble family. Whereas, the region of activity of the Mahadev Kolis lay to the north of Poona, that of the Malhar Kolis was to its south. But where the two communities lived side by side, the Mahadev Koli generally assumed the superior position of a farmer whereas the Malhar Koli figured mainly as a village servant. Both these communities disown, or used to disown, any connection with the Son Kolis and the Vaitee Kolis. I shall conclude this brief discussion of the inter-relations of the Koli communities of Maharashtra with the observation that only the two communities, the Mahadev and the Malhar seem to have had a fairly close relationship.

It is the sign of times that the Mahadev Kolis today are taking a leading part in the movement for the integration of different Koli groups into an overall community.

In tradition and in historical records, Kolis are commonly mentioned without any distinction and specification. According to one tradition which ignores even the difference in name, the Kolis are represented as the descendants of the black dwarf who is believed to have emerged from the body of the famous King

18. *Aboriginal Tribes of the Bombay Presidency*, p. 9.

19. D. N. Kale, *The Agris*, pp. 1-9.

Vena. In the Pauranic story of Vena's death and its aftermath, the sages are said to have churned some parts of his body from which a darkish dwarf emerged. There he is described to be a Nishada.<sup>20</sup> In the tradition about the origin of Sanskrit poetry recorded in the Ramayana, the hunter who killed the bird is called a Nishada. Guha, the friend of Rama's family who ferried him across the Ganga is also described as a Nishada. Commentators have been inclined to equate Nishada with Koli.<sup>21</sup> Siddheswarsastri Chitrav describes Bhريسुन्दिन, whose story appears in the Ganesha Purana, as a Koli who lived in the Dandakaranya waylaying travellers.<sup>22</sup>

In another tradition prevalent among the Mahadev and other Kolis, Valmiki, the first Sanskrit poet and the famous author of the Ramayana, is represented as their ancestor. Their supposed connection with Valmiki rests on occupational and not on racial identity. Valmiki's story as narrated in the Skanda Purana<sup>23</sup> represents him as the son of a Brahmin reared by a Kirata and as such as having taken to the living of waylayers like the Kiratas. Owing to this aberrant activity of his, Valmiki was designated a Koli. Valmiki's subsequent reclamation and regeneration not being germane to the tradition may be left out.

Whatever may be the historicity of the supposed connection, it is a noteworthy fact testifying to the operative reality of the sentiment, that in this Koli region of the high peaks of the Sahyadri commonly dedicated to Shiva, Mahadeva or Shankara and dotted with the standard representations of that God, the Lingas of great venerability, there are a number of Maruti or Hanuman (Monkey-God) temples which are an indication to the veneration paid by the Mahadev Kolis to Rama and his life-story immortalised and popularised by Valmiki. There are even more positive traditions associated with this region in the minds of the Mahadev Kolis sanctifying it as the land where some of the most memorable events in Rama's life occurred.

The Mahadev Kolis have appropriated the common tradition that the region round about Nasik represents the Danda-

20. Chitrav, *Prachina Charitra Kosha*, p. 554.

21. Vide Mallinatha on *Raghuwamsa*, XIV, 52; XVI, 32, 57.

22. Chitrav, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 523.

karanya of the Ramayana. But whereas in the common tradition Panchavti is the place where Rama is supposed to have lived for some time as an exile, the Mahadev Kolis go a step further and point out to Taked, a place eighteen miles away from Igatpuri, where the devoted character Jatayu, whose capital was at the Patta fort nearby, fell wounded in his fight with Ravana for the liberation of Sita. They have further elaborated the story making Taked a repository of all the sacred places of India. Jatayu is said to have requested Rama to take him round to all the holy places of India so that he may breathe his last in peace. Rama, finding Jatayu too much exhausted for a journey, is believed to have gathered together all those places at the spot, Taked. To assure Jatayu of the presence of the holy places, Rama showed him the 'Ramnal' plant which flourishes only on the banks of the Ganga. Jatayu felt satisfied and breathed his last. However fanciful the story might be, the current reality is that the pond at Taked is commonly known in the region as Sarva-Tirth, that is, the combination of all holy places. Another pond nearby is believed to be Prayagatirtha. This holy place is represented by a separate pond because it is said to have arrived on the scene later.

An event of even an earlier part of Rama's life has an association for the Mahadev Kolis with another spot. The gorge that they call Tratikadara is not very far from Taked. The demoness Tratika, in the Ramayana story, is said to have been killed in his adolescence by Rama in the company of Vishwamitra, somewhere in the forest of Baghelkhand to the north of the Narmada and perhaps in the valley of the Sona.<sup>24</sup> The Mahadev Kolis in identifying the spot near Taked as the scene of Tratika's death in their enthusiasm could not notice the improbability. To clench the issue of their connection with Valmiki they have even identified the place of Valmiki's hermitage in their regin at the village Randha, well-known for its falls, five miles from Bhandardara. The spot is known as 'Tatobacha Matha'—the hermitage of the grandfather. Valmiki, the grandfather *par excellence* is referred to as Tatoba not only in Koli folk-songs but also in those of the Thakurs and other agricultural communities of the region.

24. Chitrav, op. cit., pp. 488, 541.



It will be readily appreciated that these traditions as pieces of ethnic history are almost worthless. The one significant point that emerges from them is that for long ages the people inhabiting the region of the Kolis and roundabout and also the Kolis themselves have looked upon waylaying and robbery as the traditional activity of the Kolis. Antisocial and tainted militancy having thus been associated with Kolis they have been dreaded and despised for some centuries past. The treatment meted out to some of them by the Peshwas<sup>25</sup> in the interest of peace is a standing testimony to this sentiment.

Whether the Mahadev Kolis are the autochthones of the Maharashtrian region they occupy today or whether they have displaced an earlier people there, the first historical record of the Kolis is the founding of a Koli kingdom in North Konkan by one Jayba Popere—Pauperah of the record—and its recognition in A.D. 1346 by one of the Bahamani kingdoms. This formed the State of Jawhar which now is integrated into the Thana district. A social change has accompanied this political change. Whereas since the Bahamani days the personal names of the rulers of Jawhar ended with the title Shah, those of their descendants in the Republican era end with the Marathi suffix 'Rao'. Jawhar then commanded twenty-two forts and a yearly revenue of nine lakhs of rupees. It appears further from the account that smaller chieftainships of the Kolis were spread over Ahmednagar and Poona districts. The ruler of Jawhar when last it was a State, bore the surname Mukne. It is stated that the family is the same as that of Popere. Though the date of the change of name is not ascertainable, the information is vouchsafed that Popere originally came from Kumbhalne near Khirvire (Khirle) in Akola taluka. In support of this contention it is pointed out that in the village of Kumbhalne, about a mile from Khirvire, even today Poperes form about eighty per cent of the population. For some reason that family is said to have moved on to the village Mukni where it built a mud-fort. Since then there has been a tendency for the Popere family to be known as Muknikar, family from Mukni. Muknikar simplified

25. *Diaries of the Peshwas* Thorale Madhavrao, Vol. I, pp. 297, 304; Savai Madhavrao, Vol. II, pp. 145-150, 157-160, 97-98, 177; Bajirao II, Vol. II, p. 163.

into Mukne, in general consonance with the 'e'-ending family names of the Mahadev Kolis, became the standardised appellation of the Popere family.

The second historical reference to the Kolis is specially to those of Jawhar. In A.D. 1559 the Portuguese attacked them and passed through their country. Some years later in A.D. 1583, when the Portuguese tried to repeat their exploit, they suffered considerable loss. In the seventeenth century names of three important towns situated within the territories of the Raja of Jawhar and other Koli chiefs are mentioned. They are Daman, Vaze, modern Vashind, and Darila, modern UMBERGAON.<sup>26</sup> Another reference of the seventeenth century appears in an intimation or 'parwana' from Delhi dated A.D. 1637, announcing the despatch of a force for the suppression of Kolis, which till recently was in the possession of the keeper of a Muhammedan tomb of Barhanpur.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps it is the echo of this rebellion that is referred to by Capt. Mackintosh<sup>28</sup> in his description of the rebellion of the Koli Sarnaik Khemi. He states that Khemi and other Koli chiefs, apparently stirred by Shivaji's success against Bijapur tried to shake off the Muslim rule and to transfer their allegiance to Shivaji. The Moghul army sent to suppress the movement having overpowered the Kolis and destroying a whole lineage of Khemi took the prisoners to Junnar and cut off their heads and piled them into a pyramid. Over it they built a platform which is known as 'Kala Chabutara', black platform. This happened about A.D. 1657.

The next historical mention comes a century later and occurs in the Diary of the Peshwa Balaji Bajirao. It refers to the taking over by the Peshwa of the fort of Kurag in 1741-42 which till then was in the possession of Kolis.<sup>29</sup> The second reference is to the Inam land of a Koli of the village Vadavli.<sup>30</sup>

In 1750-51 the Peshwa annexed fourteen Mahals with all

26. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XIII (Thana), pt. II, pp. 453-54.

27. Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., p. 533.

28. *Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society*, Vol. I, pp. 241-2, 244.

29. *Diaries of the Peshwas, Balaji Bajirao*, Vol. II, p. 100.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

their forts in Prant Surgana, District Nasik, which was till then in the possession of Kolis.<sup>31</sup> There are frequent references from 1760 onwards till 1799 either to the taking over of forts from Kolis or to the suppression of their riots, or again to their criminal activities. Of these I shall select only five for mention, three to the State of Jawhar and two to the rebellious activity of two other well-known Mahadev Koli families Bhangare and Bambale. An entry of A.D. 1769-70 in the Diary of Madhavrao I<sup>32</sup> refers to the grant of villages to three Koli families, Bhangare, Bambale and Bokad, as hush-money. An entry for the year A.D. 1776-77 in Savai Madhavrao's Diary<sup>33</sup> refers to the breaking in of Jiwaji Bambale and bringing him under submission and service to the Peshwa along with his help-mates Khade, Bhangare and Pichad of Rajur.<sup>34</sup>

Of these families those of Bhangare and Khade worked as daring help-mates, along with Pattikar brothers of their caste, in the conquest from the Nizam, in A.D. 1761, of the fort of Trimbak for the Peshwa.<sup>35</sup>

The references of Jawhar are particularly interesting because they mention Ranis of Jawhar as either rulers or managers of dominions, and also because of the peculiarity of the personal names of the Jawhar rulers. The first mention in the year A.D. 1760-61 refers to a dispute between the male would-be heir and the female heir to the throne. The male is named Krishnasha, which is a corruption of Krishna-Shah, the latter part being the title conferred on the rulers by Muhammad Tughlak. The Peshwa Balaji Bajirao handed over the management of the Jawhar State to the female heir Mohan Kunwar—mark the Rajputization of the personal name—and decreed that after her death it would pass over to the son of Krishnasha.<sup>36</sup> It seems the son of Krishnasha was Patangsha who having died, the State passed to Raja Vikramsha<sup>37</sup>. The last reference dated A.D. 1784-85 is in the Diary of Savai Madhavrao and refers

31. *Diaries of the Peshwas, Balaji Bajirao*, Vol. I, p. 268.

32. *Diaries of the Peshwas, Thorale Madhavrao*, Vol. I, p. 304.

33. *Diaries of the Peshwas, Savai Madhavrao*, Vol. II, pp. 151-2.

34. Bambale, Bhangare and Khade were Jahagirdars until the Jahagirs were recently abolished.

35. Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 244.

36. *Diaries of the Peshwas, Balaji Bajirao*, Vol. I, p. 160.

37. *Diaries of the Peshwas, Bajirao II*, p. 163.

to the instigation of Koli disturbances by Abai, the Rani of Jawhar. The Peshwa seems to have brought her over to his side by providing sumptuously for her upkeep.<sup>38</sup> That the Kolis were well integrated into the political society of Maharashtra and the main bulk of the community looked up to the Peshwas as the natural leaders is reflected in a routine occasion of Koli life even to-day. There is a pathetic song describing graphically the assassination of the young Peshwa Narayanrao which is current to-day and is sung while grinding corn or while engaged in agricultural operations by females.

The British conquest of the Maratha dominions was completed with the acquisition of North Konkan, about A.D. 1818, by the victory of Capt. Barrow over an army in which, with other soldiers, there were Kolis. Koli bands, however, continued to trouble the district till about 1830.<sup>39</sup> Though this revolt was put down by Capt. Mackintosh, yet within a decade or so Raghoji Bhangare raised his banner again and the turmoil lasted till A.D. 1848. The immediate cause of Raghoji's revolt was the torture of his mother, and its objective was the Marwadi merchants, one of whom seems to have tortured Raghoji's mother. Raghoji with his band of Kolis ran over Nasik district cutting the nose of every Marwadi he could catch hold of.

To meet the terrorizing raids of the Bhils, the British very soon found it necessary to raise a corps of Kolis, the hereditary rivals of the Bhils, under Col. Nuttall. Javji Bambale, the Naik of the Bambales, was put at the head of six hundred Koli trainees amongst whose officers was a brother of Raghoji Bhangare, the architect of the former revolt.

It is but fair for the Kolis, whose revolts and atrocities have been described from time to time, to quote here some remarks about those trainees and their behaviour: "... in spite of the want of leisure, they mastered their drill with the ease of born soldiers and proved skilful skirmishers among hills and in rough ground . . . They were great walkers . . . often marching thirty or forty miles in a day . . . Always sprightly, clean and orderly. . . . They showed the same dashing and

38. *Diaries of the Peshwas, Savai Madhavrao*, Vol. II, pp. 103-5.

39. Mackintosh, op. cit., pp. 258 ff.

persevering courage."<sup>40</sup> This corps seems to have been employed also in connection with the putting down of the revolt of 1857<sup>41</sup> and was ultimately disbanded in 1861.

Further story of the Mahadev Kolis is mostly of a community that was frustrated and dislodged from its militant though irregular occupation. The records do speak of organized dacoities which were almost of the nature of a revolt in A.D. 1879. Koli bands under Krishna Sable of the Purandar Ghera were responsible for them.<sup>42</sup> But I am not satisfied that this particular turmoil can be credited to the Mahadev Kolis. The Kolis of the Purandar Ghera are mostly Malhar or Panbhare Kolis. Mahadev Kolis, therefore, must be considered as not figuring specially till A.D. 1914 in which year they were notified as a criminal tribe in Nasik district under the Criminal Tribes Act. Subsequently all the Kolis living in the hilly areas of Poona, Ahmednagar, Nasik and Thana districts were included in the notification.<sup>43</sup> Even in the Census of 1921<sup>44</sup>, the Mahadev Kolis do not figure among the Forest Tribes. In 1925 there were more than one thousand Mahadev Kolis who were registered under the Criminal Tribes Act.<sup>45</sup> Only a few years before the repeal of this Act, a band of Mahadev Kolis under the leadership of one Ladya, whom the Mahadev Kolis of Rajur today, disown, and represent as a Thakur, committed several robberies and dacoities in Ahmednagar and Nasik districts.

The extent of their criminal habits in contemporary times is measured by the fact that Dr. Chapekar came across in the village of Manik Ozar, not much in the interior and with a population of about four hundred, only one man who was convicted for criminal offence. He is evidently a recidivist having been convicted thrice between 1934 and 1952, once for illicit distillation, another time for stealing a hen and lastly for trespass over a field. That in the more remote interior their record of behaviour may be much worse seems probable. It was

40. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XVI (Nasik), pp. 200-201.

41. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XVII (Ahmednagar), pp. 419-20.

42. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XVIII (Poona), pt. III, pp. 38-39.

43. *Report of the Criminal Tribes Enquiry Committee*, 1939, pp. 19-20.

44. *Census of India, 1921*, Vol. VIII, pt. 1 (Bombay Report), p. 186.

45. *Report of the Criminal Tribes Enquiry Committee*, 1939, pp. 19-20.

found that in the records of the Junnar Police Station, till May 1956, there were registered fourteen Mahadev Kolis with their convictions for criminal offences.

Until quite recently, the Mahadev Kolis of Akola-Igatpuri region had to carry a certificate of the Patil of their village before leaving on a journey. The surnames of some of the Mahadev Koli families offer another piece of evidence in this direction. It is said that three brothers involved in a dacoity and wanted by the officers of the State used different stratagems to evade the pursuers. One hid himself in a sack, one in a palm-grove and one in a skin-bag of a shoemaker. It is from these devices that the descendants of the three got the names Gondake, Shinde and Dhadawad. Similarly a Borhade having decamped with the jewellery of the then Raja of Jawhar concealed himself in a seedling-plot of paddy to evade the Raja's men. His descendants are since known as Rongates from Rong meaning seedling-plot. Hajares are believed to be the descendants of one who was required to report at a Police Station every day. Whether the names have so changed or not, Gondakes, Dhadawads and Shindes are 'gotri-bhaus' to-day and so are Rongates and Borhades.

Truely does the following current remark summarise the record and potentialities of the Mahadev Kolis: 'The Koli pleased, feasts you; enraged, he burns your all.'<sup>46</sup>

Mackintosh has carefully stated the fact that the community of Mahadev Kolis has enfolded within itself derelicts or rebellious members of other castes. He has also recorded irrefutable evidence in the form of a ceremony for the admission of outsiders into the community. He adduced the further evidence of the family surnames, some of which are specific to certain other castes.<sup>47</sup> In view of this composite nature of the community, the homogeneity in appearance, dress, habits and culture—barring small regional differences—that it presents is remarkable.

46. "Ugalal Koli tar charil poli, nahitar karil gharadarachi holi."

47. Mackintosh, op. cit., pp. 236, 204.

## A GENERAL ACCOUNT OF LIVING I

THE habitat of the Mahadev Kolis, as stated in the last chapter lies in the hilly regions and their population is very largely distributed in small villages of the upland, some of which are very far in the interior. The six rural centres visited by Drs. Chapekar and Agarkar in the four districts lie at an altitude of between 2,200 and about 3,000 ft. above sea level. It was found impossible to visit such places as Ratanwadi and Ghatghar which lie further higher up into the interior. Of the centres visited and studied, I have selected for formulating this account three villages with their immediate surroundings, one each in the districts of Poona, Ahmednagar and Nasik. These villages of Nimgiri<sup>1</sup>, Manik Ozar and Devargaon, in the three districts, also represent three economic levels of the Mahadev Kolis. Nimgiri may be said to be fairly well-to-do, Manik Ozar just above the subsistence level and Devargaon, poor.

From the point of the Mahadev Kolis as an ethnic group, however, Manik Ozar, which is almost at the geographical centre of their region, is also central and vital for their study as a community. I shall therefore begin with a general description of the socio-economic conditions observed in Manik Ozar and its vicinity.

Manik Ozar is situated about three miles to the south of Rajur which is a well-known market town in Akola taluka. Rajur which is about 2,000 ft. above the sea level lies seven miles to the west of Akola, the taluka town. Akola itself lies fifty-four miles north-west of Ahmednagar, the district town. There is no other town between Akola and Rajur. Mahadev Kolis who are very largely concentrated on the three sides of Rajur thin out on the east towards Akola. In the town of Rajur,

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1. Th District Census Handbook speaks of this village as Nimgir. Nimgiri is the word in general use and also the correct one. I have retained it.

the Mahadev Kolis are in a majority, and Akola has but few. In Manik Ozar itself which has not more than eighty-five households, seventy-seven are those of the Mahadev Kolis.

To get to Manik Ozar one has to travel from Igatpuri by bus to Rajur which is about two and a half hour's run. But in the rainy season, this route is only intermittently open because of the overflow of the Bhandardara lake. The alternative route is about three-quarters of an hour's run by bus from Akola, and remains open throughout the year. From Rajur one has to go on foot on a beaten track for three miles to reach Manik Ozar. Even a farmer's bullock-cart cannot travel on it. The track is narrow, winding and uphill, Manik Ozar being about 500 ft. above Rajur. A metal road about twenty feet in width was being laid at the time of enquiry and was expected to be ready in 1957. I may mention here the further fact that in the total scheme that road is to run right upto Tolarkhind, the westernmost part of the Sahyadris in this area from where one descends into the Konkan. To-day Harischandragad, the topmost point of the Sahyadris in this area, is served by a motor road but it runs through Malegaon and leaves out a large number of the eighty-two Mahadev Koli villages which for their economy are centred on Rajur and alternatively, but less commonly, on Kotul.

Though Manik Ozar has been selected for special description, yet the general outline of Mahadav Koli living in Manik Ozar is representative of the life in most of these eighty-two villages. These villages can be grouped in three units.

I shall begin with the middle group of villages like Manik Ozar which have some regular communication with Rajur but are not situated by the side of principal roads such as Kelungan, Maveshi and Sakirwadi. Another group, which is far in the interior, can hardly reach Rajur in the rainy season, like Ekdare, Panchai, etc. The third unit is of villages which have a regular road connecting them to Rajur. Bari, Randha, Shendi, Varanghushi and other villages on the Igatpuri-Akola road comprise this unit. Villages in this unit generally have some shop dealing in the provision and miscellaneous articles of daily need. Similarly, some villages of the second or the interior unit have such shops. Khirwire, not very far from Ekdare, has



a Gujar shop of such description. Villages of the first or the middle unit like Manik Ozar, on the other hand, generally do not have such permanent shops but only seasonal ones run usually by Vanjaris.

The services for which Manik Ozar and other villages depend on Rajur are indicated by the kind and number of shops at Rajur. There are eight to ten grocery and provisions shops, almost an equal number of clothiers and tailors, about ten sweetmeat shops—mostly of 'pedhas'—and seven restaurants which also sell milk-sweets. There are half-a-dozen goldsmith shops, three rice-mills, equal number of flour mills, and two oil mills. There are two hair-cutting saloons and one laundry. Besides, there are still in existence about twenty old-style oil presses, mostly in disuse. Over and above the tailor's shops mentioned, there are about seventy-five sewing machines plied by women of the Vanjari caste. The Vanjaris, some of whom are resident at Rajur, visit the villages roundabout for peripatetic trading, bartering dried fish mostly against grain. Excepting two or three sweetmeat shops, all shops are owned by non-Kolis.

The village of Manik Ozar was shifted to its present site long before memory from its former place which lay more than a furlong to the east. The idol of Maruti, the guardian deity of the village, was, however, moved into the present Manik Ozar only sixty years back. The lineage composition of Manik Ozar is as under: 35 Botes, 5 Bambales, 5 Dharades, 4 each of Jangales, Muthes and Sabales, 3 Mojes, 3 Rongates, 2 each of Bandes, Kundes, Lohokares and Talpades, and one each of Bharmal, Kokate, More and Pedekar. Of the Botes, four came from Kashti in Shahapur taluka of Thana district and four from Sangamner taluka almost before memory. Dharade from Kushi in Ambegaon, Talpade from Sangvi in Akola, Bharmal from Panchanai in Akola and Bambale from Borghar in Ambegaon are all ancient arrivals. The Jangales are unable to say from where they came but are positive that they are here for three generations. Muthe from Kopare in Junnar, Kunde from Avandh in Sinnar and Bande from Savarkute in Akola came here about sixty years ago. Moje from Ingalan in Junnar and Lohokares from that side same about fifty years ago. Rongates from Savarkute, Sabale from Paithan near Kotul and More from

Vaghdari reached here only in the last generation. The other lineages have been residents of Manik Ozar and neither they nor others have retained any memory of these lineages having come there from any other place.

Among the seventy-seven 'khatedars' or land-owners of the village, twenty-four are Botes, five Bambales, four Kundes, four Rongates, three Dharades, three Jangales and three Talpades, two Lohokares and only one Bhangare, one Bharmal and one Bande.

This completes the information about seventy-five Mahadev Koli families resident in Manik Ozar. To complete the account of the village as a whole one has to add to them six other families, are located in Chambhars and three of Mahars. While the Chambhars are located in the south-west, the Mahars are settled in the north-east, at the entrance to the village from Rajur. It is a noteworthy fact that in front of all these six houses there stands the standard Maharashtrian 'tulasivrindavan', a built-up receptacle with the holy basil plant in it, while none of the Mahadev Koli houses has it. A further fact to be borne in mind is that, though all these six families carry on agriculture, two Chambhars and one Mahar are working as primary teachers. Further, a Mahar who has managed to educate himself without the aid of a teacher carries on his agricultural pursuit.

In order to complete the account of the general lie and composition of Mahadev Koli villages in this area, I shall add a few details about Sakirwadi and Savarkute. Sakirwadi is a big village with 194 households and a population of 1009. It lies about two miles to the south-east of Manik Ozar. Though Manik Ozar has no 'wadis', hamlets, Sakirwadi, in general conformity with the habitational feature of big villages, has two 'wadis'. Sakirwadi may be said to be a Bhangare village, there being 175 families of that surname. The Bhangares of this place are the descendants of that lineage of Bhangare which figured in the last chapter. There is an interesting piece of traditional history which accounts for the complete preponderance of Bhangares. Formerly, about hundred and fifty years ago, along with the Koli Bhangares, there were a number of Maratha Talekars in the village. There was a feud between Bhangares and Talekars. Bhangares called in the aid of Bhangares of

Malharpur or Manoharpur and evicted the Maratha Talekars. To-day though the Maratha Talekars are met with at shelad near Sakirwadi, a number of their memorial tombs bear testimony to their former residence at this village. Besides Mahadev Kolis, there are two Nhavi families and one each of Sutar, Chambhar and Mahar.

Here I should mention it as a general feature of Mahadev Koli villages in this area that, as in the case of Sakirwadi, hardly three or four of the traditional twelve 'balutas' of the Maharashtra village, are to be found there.

Savarkute lies about four miles from Manik Ozar to its west. Though it is a smaller village than Sakirwadi, yet it is the home of twenty-five Mahar families forming about one-fifth of the whole village. The village, with a population of 561, has 128 families out of which one is Nhavi and one is Chambhar. Koli lineages are fairly represented. Bandes and Rongates being perhaps the most important. There are also Bhangares and Sabales and half-a-dozen less well-known lineages.

Sakirwadi is not approached by a bullock-cart but only on foot, while Savarkute can be approached from Rajur by a bullock-cart having an approach road connecting it with the road to Harischandragad. While Sakirwadi has good water supply Savarkute is rather hard put to it, for its water supply in summer.

Passing to Nimgiri we come across not only a biggish village, its population being 872, but also a well-to-do one having good water supply, both for drinking and agricultural purposes. Though smaller in population than Sakirwadi, it has six 'wadis', besides Maharwada which is also known as a 'wadi'. Three of them are nearly half a mile away. On the main site, there are about fifty houses. Two of the 'wadis' have about forty-five and thirty houses respectively, none of the rest having more than ten houses. The unity of the Maharwada-wadi with the main site is clear from the fact that the special feature of this village, namely tap-water service, is common to both. There is only one provisions shop run by a Raval. Sabales and Bhalinges are the prominent lineages here. Three Sabales, one

Bhalinge and one Rade form the panchayat which is highly respected. Among the 34 'khatedars' or land-owners of the village, there are 17 Sabales, 5 Rades, 3 Bhangales, 2 Bhalinges and 2 Ghares.

Devargaon, the third village, is typical of the poor areas occupied by the Mahadev Kolis. With a population of over 1,800, it has 114 houses with 174 families or households belonging to the Mahadev Kolis out of a total of 265. It has three 'wadis', two of them fairly big with thirty and forty houses each and the third with only ten houses. It is located on the Nasik-Harsul motor road. Harsul with a population of 1,267 is a well-known market place.

If Sakirwadi registers the conflict between the Mahadev Kolis and an ethnic group, the Marathas, commonly considered to be superior to them, Devargaon bears traditional and living testimony to their conflict with a lower ethnic group, the Konknas. Though at present there are not more than forty households of the Konknas, it is believed that formerly it belonged to them wholly. In support of this tradition it is pointed out that certain engraved stones on the outskirts of the village are the discarded deities of the original Konknas of the place. And, though there is a thick overgrowth of trees about the place, even now the Mahadev Kolis of Devargaon off and on, and invariably on the dark twelfth of the lunar month Ashvin (Vaghbaras), make an offering to them. Another and more convincing place of evidence is that first, the honorific dues of 'panchpatilki' still belong to a Konkna; second, it is a Konkna who is privileged to light the Holi Fire; and third, when on any occasion worship is to be offered either to Mariai, Bhavani or to Maruti, a Konkna begins it with the application of 'sendur', red lead, to the deity. It is pointed out further that the Konknas so displaced by the Mahadev Kolis from Devargaon, more than a hundred years ago, settled at Jategaon Bk., in Peint taluka, about six miles away from Devargaon.

Of the 174 Devargaon lineages, 114 are Mondhes, 22 Pimpalakes, 14 Bendakolis, 5 Kundes, 4 Jadhavs, 3 each of Badades and Malekars, 2 each of Gabales, Khades and Korades and one each of Achari, Dive and Kachare.

Like Nimgiri, Devargaon has a fairly large contingent of Mahars, with more than twenty families of them.

Unlike most other Mahadev Koli villages, Devargaon has a contingent of Telis, oil-pressers by tradition but combining in practice a number of small trading activities and even the larger activity of money-lending. There are not less than a dozen families of Telis in the village; and the four or five shops, including a tea-shop, that are in this village are owned and run by them. As usual, there are only three or four 'balutas', and I would have passed them by but for the fact that one of the 'balutas' is a special one not met with in the usual list and also because of the ethnic group of the 'baluta'-holder. The particular 'baluta' is called Taral and his duty is to keep the temple and its precincts clean. He does not have a piece of land for this service but is entitled to a certain measure of corn from the agriculturist at the time of harvest. That the incumbent is a Varli brings out the fact that Mahadev Kolis of Nasik district in their ethnic history have had to do more with the semi-Konkan ethnic groups, the Konknas and the Varlis, than with those of the Deccan.

Before passing on to a description of houses, I should like to note the process of 'wadi-formation'. I have already mentioned the 'wadis' of Sakirwadi and Devargaon. Manik Ozar, being a small village, has as yet no such 'wadi'. But there are two villages in the vicinity of Manik Ozar, namely Wanjulshet and Gondoshi, at each of which its 'wadi' is about less than two furlongs distant from the main site. Both the 'wadis' have been growing during the last fifteen years. On enquiry at Wanjulshet, it was found that some families from that village, about fifteen years back, seemed to have had some sad experiences in succession. Finding themselves thus unhappy, they concluded that the place had ceased to agree with them. They looked out for a nice place nearby slightly higher up, and finding potable water easily accessible, decided to shift to that place. As the land of the new site was only inferior land for agricultural purposes, no particular loss was involved. Their new settlement soon began to attract other families. To-day there are about thirty families. This is one of the two processes in which 'wadis' are formed and grow, the other being that of a

single farmer-family moving to the proximity of its fields and others owning nearby plots gravitating to it (Pl. 1). The 'wadi' at Gondoshi is a typical illustration of the latter process.

The houses of the Mahadev Kolis of Manik Ozar have low walls of sundried bricks. The bricks are prepared by the Kolis themselves. For the roof curved tiles are often used, small flat tiles less often, and Mangalore ones still less so. Houses of some of the less well-to-do have a thatched roof (Pl. 2). The curved and the flat tiles are now made locally by the Kolis themselves. This art is an important acquisition made by them during the last ten years. And it is noteworthy that an economic reason has not a little to do with it. The Kolis have appreciated the fact that firing of the tiles also burns the patch of their agricultural land and obviates the need for a separate operation of the preparation of 'rab', or the seedling-plot.

Of the seventy-five houses, forty-two are roofed with the locally-made tiles, twenty-seven with thatch and only six with Mangalore tiles. All of them are four-sloped, known in Marathi as 'chaupakhi'. Cattle and sheep are not always provided with a separate shed but when it is so, the shed, strange to say, is called *bungla*, easily confounded with *bungalow*. Some of the houses have a small separate shed for storing fuel. There is a special name for it, 'kalvad'. The inside of the house is divided at least into two compartments, the built-up receptacle for grain serving as the dividing wall in many cases. The frame of the principal door, the only one in most cases, is quite often nicely carved, the carving being commonly done by the owner himself. On the walls and on the internal partitions are, very commonly, drawn pictures of tiger, cobra and milmaids of the Krishna story. The floor of the house is well prepared and, not rarely, is decorated with the phallus or the tulasi-vrindavan figured with the seed-stones of 'babul'.<sup>2</sup>

Every house, generally, has some open space, if not all round at least in front. But houses have no windows; only one house has one small hole in the wall. The most noticeable feature of the Koli house, here, is the large earthen jar standing

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2. *Acacia arabica*.

outside by the front door. It stores potable water. Being externally coated with cement, it attracts attention from a distance.

None of the houses here has a storey or even a garret. In Maveshi there are about ten and in Sakirwadi about fifty houses with a storey or a garret. Such houses are more to be met with in the villages where some Koli Jahagirdars and relatives of the royal family of Jawhar reside. Thus, for example, at Chinchawne and Randha there are some very large and storeyed houses but on house with two storeys is found anywhere.

In spite of the fact that the Nimgiri Kolis are better off, there is no storeyed house. The better condition of the people is indicated by the fact that there are no derelict houses; second, there is a larger number of Mangalore tiled houses; third, there are houses with corrugated sheets and fourth, a cattle-shed is more common. As against this, it must be pointed out that the prevailing type is of two-sloped or *dupakhi* houses, and not of four-sloped ones as in Manik Ozar.

At the poorer centre of Devargaon, of hundred and twelve houses, the majority, namely sixty, have a thatched roof and fifty-two have curved tiles. There is one more house with corrugated sheets. Leaving this, of the others, sixty have thatched-walls, forty-seven rubble walls and only five, brick ones. Two houses have a storey and eight others have a sort of a garret. Only two houses possess carved door frames. There are not more than three houses with some kind of windows. The bulk of the houses are four-sloped or *'chaupakhi'*.

One house in Manik Ozar has a proper cot called *'palang'* in Marathi and twelve others, charpoys called *'baj'* in Marathi. At Nimgiri, of the fifty families specially investigated, only one has a charpoy. Similarly, one joint family at Devargaon has a charpoy. For infants, more often than not, is provided a cloth hammock, and is called *'hindola'*. Sometimes *'tarane'*, a basket-like contraption of bamboo strips, takes its place. One family of Manik Ozar<sup>3</sup> has two cupboards, one of which is like a meat-chest and is used for keeping milk-products. It has also two chairs, one ordinary and one easy (deck-chair), and a big mirror. One family of Nimgiri<sup>4</sup> has a cupboard and a mirror,

3. This is the family of Rongate Guruji.

4. This family is of Shri Kondiba Maruti Unde.

and another a wooden box. Devargaon families appear to be devoid of these small luxuries.

In a century and quarter there appears to have come about a great change in the health and appearance of the Hahadev Koli women. Capt. Mackintosh described them as "occasionally pretty and generally pleasing, well-made and slim, and fair and neat compared with the Kunbi women of the plain."<sup>5</sup> Both, Drs. Chapekar and Agarkar, comparing this remark with their experience, shrugged their shoulders and asserted with full emphasis the correctness of their observation that, barring such subjective valuation as "pretty" etc., Mahadev Koli women are broad and cannot possibly be described as slim or slender. Not a few of them tend to be quite fat. Nor are they fair. Their contrast with the fairer Teli women in Devargaon is very marked. They are short. The Koli male, too, is generally dark and of average height.

The dress of a Koli male clearly distinguishes him from other Scheduled Tribes in the vicinity as markedly as the dress of the female. The dress of both, the male and the female, today approximates to the dress of the Kunbi of the Deccan. The only significant difference lies in the practice of the Mahadev Koli female to wear invariably the hind pleats not tightly drawn in. On the other hand, the 'phadaki', or the scarf sported by the Koli woman is a sartorial feature she has in common with the Thakur woman. The use of the 'phadaki' is now giving place to the draping of a part of the sari drawn over the bosom, the left shoulder and the head.

One item of male dress namely, the 'langoti' or the strip of cloth covering the privities which is prevalent in such places as Manik Ozar distinguishes the Koli male from the Kunbi. This kind of lower dress is not a special preserve of the Scheduled Tribes like the Thakurs and others but is a widespread trait among the agricultural people of the Konkan.

Along with the change of the draping of the sari by females, the males have not only taken to a wide dhoti, whenever they can afford it, but have largely patronized the white cap typical of the National Congress. School children generally

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5. *Ahmednagar Gazetteer*, p. 197; Capt. Mackintosh, *op. cit.*, p. 218.



put on some kind of shirt and, more often than not, use the privacy-strip for the lower part. Quite a number of them sport a white cap, though highly soiled.

The ornaments worn by the Mahadev Koli women do not much differ either from those of the Kunbi women of the area or from those of the Thakurs. The Koli women for their 'mangalsutra', or the neck-ornament of a married woman, use the standard pair of metal beads which figure as 'mani' in the Marathi expression 'mani-mangalsutra', the insignia of the married status of a female. Like Thakur women they are not particular about 'watis' or bead-halves which are called 'mangala-sutra'. Like Thakur women, the Mahadev Koli women, too, have no head ornament to be worn on the hair-bunch behind. Their armlets and wristlets are of the standard type, the latter being a double hollow article called the 'got'. They may be of silver or of tin. The bangles are all glass ones. Toe-rings and finger-rings are generally silver, the latter being even of brass. The ear-ornaments may be of gold or brass, the one in the lobe of the ear alternatively being of some pearls. Among the neck ornaments figure 'gathale' and 'sari'. Of the 45 families of Nimgiri which provided full information about their ornaments, 22 have no ornaments worth the name. In the remaining 23 families there were 26 pairs of 'velas', 15 of 'gots', 13 of 'jodavis', 12 nose-rings, 8 'saris', 6 'gathales', 4 pairs of 'patalis', 4 pairs of 'masolyas', 2 pairs of 'bugdis' and only 1 pair of 'karnaphuls'. Of the 50 Devargaon family only 7 possess some ornaments. 4 of them have a pair of 'velas' each and 2 of them a nose-ring each. One of the possessors of the nose-ring is one of the four families having the 'vela'. Young girls dye seeds of the plant 'asvali' and stringing them together sport them on the hair. They also prepare from the palm-leaf a plait and wear it on the hair. Women were not seen with any such decoration.

The principal occupations of the Mahadev Kolis are agriculture (Pl. 3), breeding of cattle, trading in milk (Pl. 4) and milk-products and keeping of poultry. They also, wherever feasible, keep goats. The order followed in presentation is in keeping with the relative importance of the occupation in the

economic life if the people. Horticulture is almost an impossibility in a large part of their region. Big fruit trees and large vegetable trees like the 'shevaga' or 'shegat' and the jack-fruit tree are far from common. Uncultivated mango and 'jambhul' are fairly common. But the cultivated mango is not seen and perhaps cannot be grown at this altitude. Vegetable gardening, too, is very difficult, almost impossible over a large part of the region. Few enterprises in this line however exist at Nim-giri and at Devargaon and have proved successful, thanks to the well water-supply there.

In the above enumeration, occupation depending on the forest has been purposely left out. For, first, though it is lucrative for a few, for most who can do it it only represents ordinary labour like collecting hay and firewood from the jungle and selling it in the market; second, for some it is the source of direct food-supply of a kind, and on occasions the life-saver and the life-giver, its produce enabling the people to tide over their worst season. Coal-making like road-labour is again pure labour for most, though a source of prosperity for a few contractors most of whom have been non-Kolis so far.

A side occupation of an agricultural people is the running of bullock-carts for hire. But of the three centres it is only at Devargaon that about a dozen families ply bullock-carts for hire. Lack of roads is the principal reason for the very limited exploitation of this source of income.

The terrain being what it is, the agriculture of this region is partially on terraced and partially on plain fields. The grain and pulses cultivated in the three centres differ only slightly.

Seventy-seven households of Manik Ozar, fifty of Nimgiri and fifty of Devargaon were studied in detail. All the grain produced by them is thus known and the following statement based on these figures lists the quantity of all the types of grain which a family on an average annually produced in each of these centres.

## Statement I

*Average Annual Quantity of Grain Produced per Family*

(in maunds)

Type of grain	Manik Ozar	Nimgiri	Devargaon
Paddy	10.3	32.0	4.6
'Nagali' and 'vari'	4.3	1.6	10.6
Wheat	0.3	2.2	1.1
Pulses*	1.7	0.9	0.2
'Khurasani'	—	0.2	1.9

\* The pulses are 'harabhara', 'hulage', 'masur', 'tur', 'udid', and 'wal'. At Devargaon, however, only 'harabhara' is produced.

It will be seen from the statement that there is no marked difference in the kind of grains produced. Devargaon is the poorest having neither 'wal', 'udid', 'hulage' nor 'tur'. It makes up for all these by a fairly heavy produce of 'khurasani', though it is not interchangeable with any of the former grains. Devargaon, therefore, must be pronounced to be deficient in pulses. It is also short on wheat compared with Nimgiri but is very much better off than Manik Ozar in this valuable corn, Nimgiri being the richest. But its principal poverty is seen in the absolutely low amount of paddy. As between Manik Ozar and Nimgiri it is seen that Manik Ozar is poorer in paddy and richer in the inferior coan 'nagali' and 'vari'. It however makes up for this deficiency and also the deficiency in wheat by the very much larger produce of pulses like gram, being nearly twice that of Nimgiri.

Similarly, cattle wealth shows variations in the three centres. In Manik Ozar, of the seventy-seven households, seventy-four possess some cattle, goat or/and fowl. The average number of these animals, per family, is given in statement II.

## Statement II

*Average Number of Animals, per Family, at Manik Ozar*


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Bullocks	Cows	Calves	He- Buffaloes	She- Buffaloes	Buffalo Calves	Goats	FOWLS
1.2	1.4	0.7	0.08	0.4	0.15	0.8	1.5

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To compare the data with the number of animals in the two other centres, averages based on the study of fifty families each in Nimgiri and in Devargaon are presented in statement III.

## Statement III

*Average Number of Animals, per Family, at Nimgiri and Devargaon*


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Village	Bullocks	Cows	Calves	He- Buffaloes	She- Buffaloes	Buffalo Calves	Goats	FOWLS.
Nimgiri	1.9	2.6	2.0	0.2	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.4
Devargaon	1.8	0.7	0.4	0.08	0.0	0.02	0.6	0.2

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Comparing these figures, it is first seen that the favourite animal *per excellence* is the cow. The she-buffalo is found in some significant number only in Nimgiri. Nimgiri is richer than the two other centres in the typical agricultural animal, the bullock, Manik Ozar being the poorest. Devargaon's superiority over Manik Ozar in this respect is accounted for by the facility for bullock-cart hiring.

Goats, which are kept for milk and mutton, are slightly more in evidence at Manik Ozar than at Devargaon and are

almost insignificant at Nimgiri. Manik Ozar sells every day about half a maund of milk which goes to Rajur for the preparation of milk-sweets. The villages around Rajur are reported to export to it more than twenty-five maunds of milk daily. Rajur is very well known for its milk-sweet, 'pedhas', which are exported to Nasik, Shirdi and even Bombay. While Manik Ozar exports milk to Rajur, the villages of Wanjulshet, Babhulwandi, Maveshi and perhaps some other villages turn their milk into 'khava'<sup>7</sup> (milk dehydrated and solidified), out of which 'pedhas' are directly made with the addition of sugar, and export that to Rajur. Ghee is rarely seen for sale. In Nimgiri, on the other hand, milk is little sold but ghee which is sold at Junnar brings in about Rs. 500/- a year.

In the Manik Ozar and Nimgiri areas the most important contribution to the Koli economy made by the forest is through its myrobalan tree. Kolis, who have the time, collect the fruits of this tree and sell to a local petty contractor who in turn is bound to sell to a bigger merchant from whom he has generally taken some advance against an agreement for supply of myrobalan fruits. People contribute and pay to the Government on behalf of the village for the monopoly for collecting fruit in specified areas. In all the three areas uncultivated mangoes abound. And in the two months of May and June most families can afford to have that delicious sweet, namely, mango-juice for their meals almost every day. The mangoes there simply wait to be collected. And the not too poor Mahadev Koli enjoys a fair number of feasts in these two months by adding to his menu of mango-juice the 'puran-poli'. The not too well-to-do families collect from the forest the wild banana roots, process them by boiling in a particular manner and stock them for use during the rains. The fruits of 'kusari'<sup>8</sup> and 'bhokar'<sup>9</sup> though inferior, are also dried and stocked for similar use. And actually during the rains when all supplies run very low, more than a dozen different kinds of roots and vegetables — most of the

7. At Wanjulshet the 'khava'-maker is a North Indian Bhaiyya, and at Babhulvandi he is a Kannada. The industry is in the hands of the Mahadev Kolis at Maveshi.

8. *Jasminum arborescens*.

9. *Cordia myxa*.

roots, being irritants, have to be treated with some sour substance like tamarind and to be boiled and boiled again — are pressed into service. The wild grains 'kalavad' and 'barabada' are used as substitutes for gram, and 'tan', 'nil' and 'pakad' are ground into flour for bread. Wild 'nagali', too, is available in smaller quantities in certain areas. These are the life-savers and life-givers referred to above. There is one more forest product which, rather than being used as food, is utilised to procure cash and that is the delectable article honey. The Mahadev Kolis of the interior are expert, not at bee-keeping, but at detecting fully laden honeycombs and pilfering them in time.

In all the centres visited, neither cripples nor lepers were met with. Nor were deaf, mute, insane or tubercular persons noticeable anywhere. One leper was actually noticed near Manik Ozar and another was reported to have been in residence formerly in Devargaon. It was impossible to ascertain whether they were Mahadev Kolis or not. Though assertions were made by informants, both Mahadev Kolis and others, that there are some lepers among Mahadev Kolis in the region, particularly two or three at Sakirwadi, neither Dr. Chapekar nor Dr. Agarkar was able to see one. It may be noted that leprosy which in Marathi is 'maharog' is called by Mahadev Kolis as 'mahamari', the Marathi term for cholera. The information imparted by the itinerant doctor met at Jamsar about the common diseases prevalent among the Mahadev Kolis did not contain any reference to leprosy among them. One boy in Nimgiri, less than ten years of age, is known to be partially insane and one married man from Manik Ozar, about thirty years of age and educated upto the Vernacular Final, has had to give up his schooling owing to epileptic fits and is now almost an imbecile. Two blind persons were reported to have been seen, one old woman at Nimgiri and one boy at Devargaon. The latter is known to be a Mahar; and the community affiliation of the other is not known. Two lame persons were seen at Devargaon and one adult male was reported from Kelungan in Akola. Their caste affiliation could not be ascertained. In the same village one Mahar is deaf but not mute, and in Manik Ozar, the visiting Nhavi from Sakirwadi is both dumb and deaf. There is also at Manik Ozar a slightly deaf lad, who was withdrawn from school

on account of the defect. Two Mahadev Koli women and one man at Manik Ozar are sufferers from asthma. Guinea-worm does not now generally prevail. But it is reported from some villages like Katalapur, Ladgaon, Kohone, Manhere and Ambevangan. Devargaon is one of the places where the guinea-worm disease existed and exists. It is noteworthy, however, that hardly any Telis of the place suffer from it. Explanation for this phenomenon is provided by the information given by an aged well-to-do Teli of the place. He told Dr. Agarkar that it is a practice in this family to strain all drinking water through a fine piece of cloth and that owing to it there has been no guinea-worm disease in his family. He further said that one of his sons used to have the disease periodically and the cause was found to be his negligence in straining drinking water during his business trips to the Konkan. On his being careful about it he ceased to have the disease. In Manik Ozar area ill-health prevails more in the lunar months of Shravan and Bhadrapad than at any other time. Uncared for orphans, destitutes or people too old for work were neither seen nor heard of.

The scourge of the Mahadev Koli is the venereal disease. The doctor referred to above stated that all the varieties of the group prevailed among them. Dr. Chapekar was given to understand that in Manik Ozar there were more than half-a-dozen such people. Confirming evidence is afforded by the existence of a special goddess in the Mahadev Koli region. The goddess is named Varasubai. I am sorry to state that I have not been able to trace this goddess, her lineaments and functions, in the published literature of anthropology and folk-lore of the Deccan and the Konkan. I have, therefore, no alternative but to look upon this goddess as a speciality of the Mahadev Kolis. The well-known temple dedicated to this goddess stands at Sukalvedhe on the border of the Ambegaon and Junnar talukas, about ten miles from Nimgiri. Her smaller representations are spread over quite a number of bigger villages in the Mahadev Koli region. At Sukalvedhe, in the lunar month of Ashvin on every Tuesday, there is a fair in honour of this goddess. People from far and near suffering from venereal diseases gather there on these days and vow to the goddess, for cure, the sacrifice usually of a goat. It is a strong belief among

the Mahadev Kolis that it is an unfailing remedy. If a person getting cured does not fulfil the vow it is believed that he will be struck again by the same disease in an incurable form and then no amount of vowing will avail. In the Mahadev Koli view members of other castes too flock to the goddess for cure. But this view stands unsupported, there being no mention of Varasubai in the District Gazetteer of Poona. The goddess is also appealed to in cases of skin-diseases. But not many persons with skin-diseases were encountered at least at Manik Ozar. And Dr. Agarkar assures me that at Nimgiri and Devargaon, too, they are not very common.

Malaria used to be prevalent, particularly in the Manik Ozar area, but either owing to the spray of D.D.T., or through some other cause, it has ceased to be a menace for the last two or three seasons. The doctor, referred to above, mentioned that enlarged spleen was not much in evidence among the Mahadev Kolis. He, however, attested its prevalence among the Thakurs who in Thana district are spread over more or less the same area as that of the Mahadev Kolis. It is precisely this contrast that has prompted me to add in my above remark the expression "or through some other cause".

Some traditional knowledge current among the Mahadev Kolis about plants, animals and food is, as far as I know, not common among other agricultural communities of Maharashtra, though it is mostly connected with agricultural life. As should be expected there is a developed lore about bulls, regarding their quality to be judged from external observable signs. A bull with a whorl on the forehead or on the naval is good, while one with a whorl on one or both eyes is 'three-eyed'; one with it between the horns is 'crest-broken'; with the same on the back at the waist is 'waist-broken'. The latter three are all bad. A bull short-ribbed on both sides is 'eagle-like' and good, while the one with short ribs only on one side is 'broken-ribbed', and bad. A bull with a long tail is a 'sweeper', or technically 'gavanya' and is good; but one with a short tail reaching only the knee-joint is 'joint-pounder' and bad. One with nine teeth is a rare, good bullock, but one with seven teeth is a 'satalu', and, being bad, can hardly be sold. Equally bad are, one with broken teeth, one with the horns slanting to the left or a three



coloured one. A bull that snores in sleep is bad and is soon tried to be sold away; for as the saying goes, "Bull snores, its owner dies."<sup>10</sup> A he-buffalo, with its four legs white, is tolerated, but one with whites on only two legs is 'nevara' and bad; one whose knee-joints touch while walking is 'cymbals-pounder' and bad. For the plough, a pair of bullocks who are related as maternal uncle and sister's son is best, though rare to get. Apart from the reflection of social life—evidently of the past—the belief is noteworthy as it bespeaks careful breeding of cattle among the Mahadev Kolis. Evidently they try to keep some memory-record—records proper are unknown and were not possible till the other day—of the relationship subsisting among their cattle, at least the bulls. The fact that they find such a pair rare bespeaks either their failure to keep their memory-record accurate or up-to-date, or their inability to manage the breeding properly.

To preserve flour they put into it a fruit called 'gel'<sup>11</sup> which, by common experience, they must have found to be a preserver. The same 'gel' fruit is used as an antidote against lice, to preserve oil from rancidity they put a few porcupine quills in it.

One piece of traditional knowledge and practice regarding the treatment of human diseases deserves mention. The eye of one variety of fish known as 'ahir' is prized because it is credited with medicinal properties. When such a fish is caught, its eye is preserved in a ring as its stone. Whenever there is a case of the eye disease which they call 'ahir', and which appears to be conjunctivitis, they pass the eye-stone over the affected eyes. It is believed to be a sure remedy against that disease.

A number of cattle diseases are distinguished; and appropriate herbal remedies or sometimes animal remedies are applied for cure. Thus, for prolapse, the first remedy is to tie on the neck of the animal the head of a tortoise. When a cow is suspected of being barren she is made to cross an iron object while entering the cow-pen when she is led back to it after being mated with a stud-bull. Scorpion bite is considered to be dead-

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10. This belief is common in Maharashtra and extends to cows as well.

11. *Randia dumetorum*.

ly for a goat. One of the remedies, the results of which are believed to be unfailing, is to stand the legs of the affected goat in a two-seer measure. Another piece of semi-useful knowledge, concerns an unknown type of bee. The Kolis speak of a species of bee called 'tumba'. These bees dig a hole in the ground and live in it. There are not more than a dozen bees in a hive. This is a dangerous bee as its sting is believed to cause death. The honey in the comb is considered to be valuable. It is believed to have miraculous powers, a drop of it put in the eyes enabling one to see hidden treasure.

Pseudo-meteorological beliefs are of greater practical utility to them. Such beliefs if they are correct must naturally differ from region to region. They are generally about rains and storms. The Mahadev Kolis believe that when the bird 'pavasa' crows or sings, it is a sign for the rains to start. So strong is the belief in the minds of the Mahadev Kolis that they read in his crowing a message which may be translated thus: 'Drop, drop, Oh Rain! Sow, sow, Oh Farmer!'<sup>12</sup> If in the lunar month of Bhadrapad the bird 'dhanda' or 'chali' flies about, it is a sure sign of coming rain. About the time of the Diwali the flapping of its wings by the white bird 'pitadbali' on its perch is a sign of what is called by them the 'satvakadi' the 'seven cruckednesses'. The bird's particular action heralds a whole week of gale and rain. For the first three or four days of this so-called 'satavakadi', the sky is overcast with clouds and the gale blows; for the next three or four days there is heavy rain in sharp running showers. The rainy season is divided in Indian counting into a number of unit-periods known as 'nakshatras' or constellations of the signs of the zodiac, and every one of these covering the rainy season has traditionally ascribed to it some speciality about the volume and nature of rain that may be expected in its duration. The Mahadev Kolis have, what appears to me, a peculiar belief of their own about the unit-period of the season known as the Magha 'nakshatra', which begins in the third week of August, that it is 'weak', yielding hardly any rain. The next five 'nakshatras' are its helpers and they help the Magha 'nakshatra' in its work of giving rain by

12. "Pavasoba padate cha; Kunbi lok perate cha."

accompanying it, one after another, in the first five days of its period. The first five days of the Magha 'nakshatra', thus, are identified with the 'nakshatras' Purva, Uttara, Hasta, Chitra and Svati respectively. Rain during Magha 'nakshatra' falling on any of these days, the Mahadev Kolis consider to be a sure indication of getting good rain during that 'nakshatra' with which that day is identified. Thus if in the Magha 'nakshatra' it rains on its third day, then there will be good rain in the Hasta 'nakshatra' and so on. This period of the first five days of Magha 'nakshatra' has a special appellation, 'panchamagha'. It is after this period that the Mahadev Kolis begin to cut the grass called 'mol' which is valuable because it can be, and is, twisted into ropes. It seems to have some sanctity like that of 'durva' in Maharashtra and is not very different from it.

There is also some current lore about meteorological and astronomical phenomena some of which, though connected in a way with agricultural pursuits and the remaining being unconnected with it, may be termed disinterested knowledge. Of the former variety is a story current among the Mahadev Kolis about the sky. It says that formerly the sky was very low down. It so happened that a particularly vigorous Mahadev Koli woman while sweeping her compound brandished her broom so forcefully that it pushed the sky up from its position. The sky began to ascend and ascend. In the meanwhile another Koli woman who was tending her cow began to call her its name Abhali. The sky which in Marathi has the same name finding itself called by its name stopped dead. This is the reason why at present the sky is so high; so say the Mahadev Kolis.

From meteorology to astronomy would but appear to be a step in reverse. Their belief about the sky is already stated above. Another belief concerns the North Pole or Dhruva. Inability to see the the Dhruva forshadowes imminent death. They say that while building a new house they always begin it so that the first wall falls in line with the Dhruva. Dhruva is called 'Dhura' by them. The constellation of Pleiades is called 'scorpion'. The constellation of Rohini is 'marriage' comprising of the bridegroom, the bride and the torch-bearer. The constellation Mriga is 'tikande,' 'tripod'. Shukra, Venus, is called 'suka'. The Saptarshi or the Ursa Major is 'the charpoy and the thieves'

The four stars from the charpoy and the other three in a curved line are the thieves chasing the charpoy for its golden legs. The Ursa Major and Venus are utilized as indications of time in the early hours before the dawn. The rainbow is called 'devadhan', a short form of 'devadhanushya', God's bow. The sun and the moon sometimes have a halo round them. The Mahadev Kolis distinguish two kinds of halos and have beliefs about them as prognostics. Unbroken halo is called 'khala', threshing floor, and one with a break is called 'tala', lake, the break being interpreted as the channel for the water-flow. The appearance of the former indicates no rain in the near future, and that of the latter that it would fall within the next four or five days.

From astronomy I shall pass on to the Koli zoology. The balls of a bird, the Mahadev Koli assures us, lie in their stomach, seen as two small pebble-like rounds when the bird is cut open. They have worked out the anatomy of cattle according to which there is a tube attached to the mouth in which the food eaten passes and through it into a further portion of the body which they call 'dedhi'. But it is not reduced there. The 'dedhi' serves only as a store-house. When it is taken out again and chewed it passes back through the tube and the 'dedhi' into what they call the 'satpuda' for being reduced. They postulate a sieve-like organ between the 'dedhi' and the 'satpuda'. 'Kali' or heart and 'phupphus' or lung lie side by side. To the heart are attached too small purse-like organs. One of them, which is like the tongue in appearance, is called 'tili'; and the other, unnamed, is said to contain bile which is green and watery. Marrow they call 'bhegu' and fat 'manda'. Some of the Mahadev Kolis finish off the bones of fowls and they believe that some cattle even do the same when they find them in a dried condition.

Knowledge about plants is even wider and sometimes, whether true or not, quite interesting. Thus, they distinguish between male 'jambhul'<sup>13</sup> tree and the female 'jambhul' tree. The leaves of the male tree are large and broad; those of the female are long but less broad. The fruits of the former are

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13. *Eugenia jambolana*.

big; those of the latter, small. They think that birds carry seeds from one place to another and are responsible for the spread of certain kinds of plants. The seed that is contained in the excreta of birds and jackals is another source of the spread of certain plants. They instance, in this connection, the present spread of the plant called 'tantani' in their area (Manik Ozar). The mahua trees in their part, again, they ascribe to the agency of birds. It is not only the seed of any tree that is carried over long distances by wind; pods like those of 'palas'<sup>14</sup> are believed to have been blown by the wind from the Konkan into their area. Flowing water, too, can contribute to this process. The small but important medicinal plant of 'brahmi' which was formerly found only at Bhandardara is now to be met with in Akola, Vitha and such other eastern riverside places through the agency of the Pravara. Along with some other plants, 'vekhand' or the orris-root plant grows in water. 'Karavi'<sup>15</sup> the plant that provides red-like material for thatching flowers after seven years. 'Kalak', a variety of bamboo, flowers after sixty years, and 'velu', another variety, after eighty years. These, and all varieties of banana plants, die out immediately after bearing fruit.

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14. *Butea frondosa*.

15. *Strobilanthes callosus*

## A GENERAL ACCOUNT OF LIVING II

THE complex of religious beliefs and practices current among the Mahadev Kolis is fundamentally the same as amongst Kunbis, with the addition of a few gods and goddesses whom they have in common with the Scheduled Tribes of Maharashtra and one or two peculiar to them alone. In general they refer to Mahadev, Shiva or Shankara particularly represented at Bhimashankar and the goddess Kamalaja, also represented there, as their tutelary deities *par excellence*. This common belief is strengthened by the routine of their life. As will be described later, the annual fair at Bhimashankar is an event of great importance to them<sup>1</sup> and is visited by them in large numbers. Another important fair, that of Kalasubai, also a form of the same goddess as that of Bhimashankar, is even more central to them and is far-famed in Maharashtra. At Trimbak, further north, a famous place of pilgrimage dedicated to Mahadev, they gather together for community purposes from time to time. A colony of theirs to be found there—about a hundred households—live mainly by plying sedan-chairs (Pl. 5) for taking the pilgrims to the more sanctified points and peaks at the place. For some years past they have been organising the establishment of a 'dharmashala' of their own at Trimbak and recent information vouchsafes the fact that they have collected more or less enough money to buy the building shown in Plate 6, which they intend to alter to suit the requirements of a 'dharmashala'. In Manik Ozar area there are a few places like Maveshi, Ratanwadi and others where there are small phallus temples. They come into prominence only at the time of Shivaratri, when people flock there for the fair. Of such temples the one at Khirwire near Rajur is of Bhairavanatha. This Bhairavanath is famous as an antidote against serpent-bite and as the deity that possesses a priest-magician, 'bhagat', on occasions.

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1. It has been so for a very long time. Vide Capt. Mackintosh, *op. cit.* p. 231.

Apart, however, from grand occasions, and the marriage function when Mahadev is invoked and worshipped along with the tribal God, Hirava, neither Mahadev, nor Kamalaja nor Kalasubai plays any memorable role in their life. Nor is it known that any special vows are offered to Mahadev, though they are made to Kamalaja and Kalasubai. Thus, at Ningiri, of the three centres nearest to Bhimashankar, the vows to Kamalaja are fulfilled by sacrificing goats and fowls in the lunar month of Chaitra. But it is only the Mahars of the place who offer to Mahadev every fourth year a goat, and fowls in the intervening years.

The worship of Rama and Krishna has begun to make its appearance. At Kelungan in Akola Rama's birth is appropriately celebrated. The idol stands in the village temple of Maruti. Krishna's birth is celebrated more in the Konkan. It is specially observed at Nyahale near Jawhar where 'bhagats' get possessed on that day.

The principal temple of a Mahadev Koli village is dedicated to the monkey-god, Maruti. Of the eighty-two villages of the Manik Ozar area, only seven do not have it. An explanation is offered to bring them in line with the others. It is stated that the Maruti idol of these places was thrown into the river. If asked why, the people have no answer. And the phallus, excepting for those small temples mentioned above, is found in one corner in most of the Maruti temples. In Manik Ozar, the chief temple is of Maruti. In Devargaon, of the three principal temples, the one of the male deity, and also the biggest, is dedicated to Maruti. By the side of Maruti stands the phallus and the idol of Ganapati, the elephant-headed god

The principal deity of the Mahadev Kolis is, therefore, Maruti (Pl. 7), the monkey-god. Its temple serves also as a community centre. It is a temple, a dormitory, a school, a 'chavadi' (village office), a 'dharmashala' (dak-bungalow) and a gymnasium combined. The youths of the place and the guests of the village sleep there. More often than not, the primary school of the village is housed there. If some of the villages have a separate building for a primary school, those having one for a 'chavadi' or village-office are very much less. The village Maruti temple fills the gap by serving as the 'chavadi' where

the taluka and district officers on their itinerary transact their business, and where the village people meet for their own affairs or for gossip. Travellers, even when there is a 'chavadi' in the village find the shelter of the Maruti temple more congenial. In some places like Devargaon it serves as a gymnasium, the 'mallakhamb' pole and the wrestling-pit being situated in its compound.

Before proceeding with the magico-religious beliefs centred round gods, goddesses, godlings and spirits, it is necessary to refer to a persistent observation in the literature on Mahadev Kolis that they were formerly Lingayats whose marriage and funeral ceremonies were conducted by Raval Gosavis till the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> In one place it is stated that the Lingayat priests, Raval Gosavis, were supplanted by Brahmins during the time of the third Peshwa, Balaji Bajirao.<sup>3</sup> There is no trace of Lingayatism among them today but in one centre, Nimgiri, it was ascertained that even to-day it is a Raval priest that officiates at the obsequies to be performed on the tenth day after death. The local grocer who is a Raval, officiates for them at Nimgiri, and the postman serving at Ambegaon who is a Raval has the right to officiate in forty villages of the taluka. At Devargaon there is no Raval and the Raval at Nasik does not serve Devargaon. But Ravals to-day consider and declare themselves to be non-Lingayats.

Another frequent statement in these sources refers to Khandoba of Jejuri as being one of the principal deities of these people.<sup>4</sup> Very searching enquiry at Ghodegaon in Ambegaon taluka and at Jejuri itself did not confirm it. As a matter of fact it was definitely stated that only on very particular occasions some of the Mahadev Kolis, as for example the royal family of Jawhar—whose Maratha connections are well-known—go there to pay homage.

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2. *Gazetter of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XIII (Thana), pt. 1, p.168; Capt. Mackintosh, *Op. cit.*, p. 238.
  3. *Gazetter of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XVII (Ahmednagar), p. 200.
  4. *Gazetter of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XVII (Ahmednagar), p. 199; Vol. XIII (Thana), pt. 1, p. 171.



Besides its Maruti temple, a Mahadev Koli village has at least one or two temples dedicated to other male gods. But it is a speciality of these gods that they may even be placed under a tree or even by the roadside without a cover. Of such gods, Gavadeva, the village tutelary deity, is the most common. Almost invariably he is to be found on the outskirts of the village. He is represented by a stone besmeared with red lead. At some places an idol made of five metals is installed. It is a rare practice in certain villages to change this idol every three years. At Manik Ozar and some villages of that area the Gavadeva is called Kaloba and an annual 'urus' or fair is held in its honour. At Manik Ozar the idol is changed every three years, the old one being buried nearby. For the installation of a new idol Brahmin priests are not called in. Village leaders with the help of the local 'bhagat-varekari', the magician-priest, set it up. Only one or two goats and one or two cocks have to be sacrificed. Nearby this idol stands a bamboo-grove. It is stated that formerly the 'varekari', the magician-priest used to have his trance-performance from the top of the bamboos. Discreetly it was stated that today such powerful magician-priests do not exist. For the setting-up of a fresh representation of a deity in Devargaon area, I am assured, over and above the sacrifices mentioned in connection with the setting-up of the image of Kaloba at Manik Ozar, a 'gondhal', a kind of weird dance performed by professionals known as Gondhalis, has to be organised.

Another god, in belief and practice even more common and more important than other gods, and from the ethnological point of view quite significant, is Vaghoba or Vaghdeva, the tiger-god. Not infrequently his image, a sort of a tiger carved on a piece of wood or rarely on stone, stands behind the Maruti temple or thereabout. At least one temple of Vaghoba is known and that is at Talmachi near Nimgiri. Tiger or rather tiger-like wild cats have been such a source of danger to the livelihood of the Mahadev Kolis in their present habitat that they have become an obsession in the communal consciousness. An illustration of this is provided by a belief, which has the potency of a scientific truth for the Mahadev Kolis, about trees which they call 'vaghakhetanis'. A tree against which a tiger is known

or believed to have rubbed his body is called 'vagha-khetani', 'tiger-scraper'. At Manik Ozar many Koli cowherds emphatically asserted that they have seen such trees in the jungle in their area and that if the tail of an animal touches one of them it gets paralysed there and then. It is only if by good fortune the cowherd sees the stuck cattle in time and goes on howling aloud "hule, hule", that the cattle get disengaged and are saved. It is noteworthy that the Kanarese word for tiger is 'huli'. There is a special day dedicated to Vaghoba. Its observance will be fully described later under Festivals.

Of the other male godlings of the Mahadev Koli pantheon, Hirava deserves to be mentioned first because the cult of this godling on this side of Maharashtra is very largely a feature of two of the Scheduled Tribes properly so called, namely the Thakurs and the Varlis. This godhead of Hirava is the more instructive of cultural affinity because the basis of the representation of the godling, a bunch of peacock feathers, has played an important role in the magico-religious life of India.<sup>5</sup> Hirava is represented by a bunch of peacock feathers in which is inserted a silver 'tak'. It is a speciality of this godling that a new representation has got to be made at least once in ten to fifteen years because the fine filaments of the feathers drop out, clearly exposing the white stem. It is a further speciality that at such renovation it is incumbent to hold a 'gondhal' and to offer a sacrifice of a goat or goats, cocks being not considered adequate or appropriate. A further link in the chain of cultural affinities is that at this 'gondhal' the musical instrument called 'dhak' has to be played. The 'dhak'-player is a specialist and is to be met with among Mahadev Kolis of the area though at Manik Ozar and Devargaon none was found.

If the prevalence of Maruti cult establishes the close connection of the Mahadev Kolis with the Kunbis, the Marathas and other high castes of Maharashtra, their faith in Vaghdeva and Hirava and the annual celebration of the former reveals their affinity not only with the other Scheduled Tribes of Maharashtra but also with others further east like the Gonds.

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5. G. S. Churye, *Indian Sadhus*, p. 156.

Next in significance is the Cheda. He is almost as ubiquitous as Vaghdeva. At Devargaon he is represented by a wooden post and stands in front of the Maruti temple. This godling is invariably attended to during the Holi festival and is a member of the pantheon which receives an annual homage known as 'sath bharane', described later. The worship he receives is the daubing of red lead.

Vira is always represented by a roundish stone and is to be met with on the boundary of almost every field. Vira is otherwise known as Pitar or manes. After the death of the principal male member of the family if on any account the family fails to get good crops from its fields or suffers an untimely calamity it is an occasion for a Vira to be set up representing the deceased member. The sacrificial pacification of the Vira is made with the offering of a cock, a goat not being his perquisite. If a married couple in the family does not have a child for some time a gold 'tak' in the name of the deceased member is kept in the house. Even when there are children in the family, a silver 'tak' in honour of the deceased is sometimes similarly treated. That the Vira or the Pitar of the Mahadev Kolis is something more than the ordinary Pitar of the Marathas, for example of the Haveli taluka in Poona district, is evident from the manner in which the obsequies of the thirteenth day, which is the day of manesification or deification, are called particularly, the communal meal which is an inevitable part of the rites. It is called 'bhandara', a term which among Marathas, Kunbis and other high castes of Maharashtra is used for certain aspect of worship of God. In this connection I should mention that the tomb of one Vyankoji at Jambhore, about five miles from Ambegaon, is offered many a vow. It is believed that it stands for the Koli chief of that name who was killed by Muslims.

Another member of the pantheon almost as frequent as Cheda is Bhairoba, who should not be confounded with Bhairav of the Hindu pantheon. Bhairoba is represented by a stone with, as usual, some red lead on it, more often than not, on hill points and is considered a protector of the cattle and people from unwary falls. Khanderao, another member, though less common should not be confounded with Khandoba of Jejuri.

Wherever he occurs in the Koli region he does so in the form of a full phallus. He is a general protector from diseases both of the cattle and of the crops. Vetal, quite familiar in Maharashtra, is another godling appearing here and here, but only in the form of a stone. Of the many other godlings, Mhasha must be singled out for, he appears in the form of a crude representation of a he-buffalo carved on a piece of stone. He does not have a temple but is always in the open. His annual worship he receives at the time of the Holi. At other times if anyone is possessed of an evil spirit, the godling is offered a cocoanut to get rid of the spirit. There is also Chavata. His image is a piece of wood in which two small figures embossed on a thin gold plaque are fixed. At Devargaon it stands outside the temple of Bhavani, and another outside that of Maruti.

Of the female goddesses and godlings, Kamalaja, mentioned above must be considered to be pre-eminent, not to speak of Varsubai whose role I have already described. She has small temples dedicated to her both at Nimgiri and at Devargaon, but none at Manik Ozar. In older records, the tutelary goddess of the Mahadev Kolis is frequently stated to be Bhavani, the same famous goddess of Tuljapur<sup>6</sup> in whom Shivaji had implicit and unbounded faith. And this statement seems to be borne out by the fact that at Devargaon the second biggest temple of the place is dedicated to her. Her image in the temple is a crude representation on a small stone about 6 feet high, and is daubed all over with red lead. By her side stands a phallus. She is one of the two goddesses who receive the annual worship at the Sath festival. A fair is held in her honour at Devargaon on the bright fifteenth of the lunar month, Chaitra. As usual it is called 'urus'. The whole village contributes for its expense. The celebration, as usual, consists of 'tamasha' performances throughout the night.

Next in importance, strange to say, comes Mariai. This is strange because Mariai is *par excellence* the goddess of Mahars in Maharashtra generally, and in the predominantly Maratha areas like those of Poona district in particular. In Mahadev

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6. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XVII (Ahmednagar). p. 199.

Koli villages, too, her temple is commonly situated in or at the entrance of the 'Maharwada', Mahar quarters. But at Devargaon her temple though smaller than that of Bhavani is one of the three principal temples of the village and quite clearly belongs to the Mahadev Kolis. But there is no particular fair in honour of, or specific annual worship offered to, the deity. In the temple on a wooden post about two feet from the floor is fixed a small piece of wood about 3 inches in length shaped like the face of a horse. Two other smaller posts, too, have such representations on them. All are bedaubed with red lead.

Another member of the female pantheon is a sort of a counterpart of Hirava attested in the Scheduled Tribe of the Warlis.<sup>7</sup> Her image is made of bronze, and represents the ear of the corn 'nagali', being five-pronged. The Mahadev Kolis had formerly to exchange a cow or a bullock for her idol; now-a-days they have to pay fifty rupees, a very high price. In contrast to other goddesses, this Kanastri may be described as a 'vowed' godling. Her image is installed if corn does not proceed properly in its ripening or if too much grass grows in the field. There is another female godling specifically effective in agriculture. She is Bhagavati represented only by roundish stones bedaubed with red lead. She is regularly invoked at the time of sowing and is vowed an offering for preventing the depredations of rats and mice till all corn is safely garnered. The vow is fulfilled when the threshing operations are complete, at which time a cocoanut and a cock are offered to her in fulfilment of the vow.

Of the other female goddesses and godlings Kalasubai of Bari excepted, Jakhubai, Satubai, Ranai or Ranabai all appear to be spirit-godlings, though like the various spirits to be mentioned they are not called 'maulis'. There must be a number of other goddesses to judge by the two instances within observation. There is one Nimbabai at Nimgiri and there is another Muktabai at Wanjulshet.

The gods, goddesses and godlings so far described form one aspect of the Kolis' pantheon of supernatural entities. It receives annual, seasonal or occasional worship and the most important members of it form important foci of com-

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7. K. J. Save, *The Warlis*, p. 47.

munity life through their festivals, but hardly receive any daily regular worship or recognition. When any of them are kept in the house as domestic deities they receive worship not more than thrice a year: on the first of the lunar month of Chaitra, the bright third of the lunar month of Vaishakh and the bright tenth of the lunar month of Ashvin. Even the care-taker of a temple, if any, has such low remuneration attached to his duty or obligation that he has no particular incentive to attend to the temple at all regularly. In most of the village temples no lamp is lighted before the deity. Hardly anyone visits the temple regularly. Except on occasions of vows or on some special festivals, no offerings of either money or corn are ever made.

It is in keeping with this cultural trait of theirs that the worship of Satyanarayan, a deity who is worshipped by Maharashtrian castes only in connection with vows, is gaining in popularity among the Mahadev Kolis, particularly in its communal form ('sarvajanik').

All this leads one to the conclusion that the higher aspect of the pantheon has but only slight influence on the daily life of the people. However, one of the songs most frequently sung as an accompaniment to the daily grinding of corn by women ends with reference to Vitthal and Rukmini to whom the whole flour is offered and their blessing invoked. In the same ending five flowers are despatched to the deity at Bhimashankar and finally obeisance is made to Almighty God. There are a number of 'malakaris', that is the followers of the Vithoba-cult with Jnaneshvara and Tukaram as their patron saints. The 'malakaris' not only abjure animal food but also do regular 'bhajan', and even organise 'bhajan' parties. In some families 'mala', rosary of 'tulasi' beads, the insignia of a 'malakari' is given even to a child in cradle. In some of the families are found not only representations of the lower pantheon but also idols of the higher pantheon though they are not offered daily regular worship.

Whatever the uplifting, the influence of the higher pantheon works, the terrorizing, though apparently beneficent, role of the lower pantheon and of the accompanying rites predominates. The only traces of totemism found are in the two practices: one, the custom among the females of Bote family whose fami-

ly-deity is Kaloba, not to wear black clothes, and the other, that of the families which have Ghorapad (iguana) as their deity not to eat the iguana.

The Mahadev Kolis believe at least in a dozen different types of spirits among whom Munja and Khavis appear to be the only males. The rest of them are all females and are known as 'maulyas', 'mothers'. Whereas the male spirits are common in Maharashtra under identical names, the appellation of the female ones, though reminiscent of the Sanskrit 'Sapta-matris', 'seven mothers', is not met with either amongst Kunbis or other castes of the locality or among the two or three Scheduled Tribes who are their neighbours.

The belief in the spirit world and in the harm it can do or can be made to do is so intense that the Mahadev Kolis have traditionally been mortally afraid of the Thakurs<sup>8</sup> their immediate neighbours among the Scheduled Tribes—whom they credit with proficiency in controlling the spirit world.

Small wonder then that we find among them 'bhagats' or priest-magicians who are such a vital element in their life that the residence of a well-known 'bhagat' is generally known as a 'thanaka', the place *par excellence*. There is implicit faith in the pronouncements of a 'bhagat' in trance. If in such a condition he declares a particular person as practising black magic, the Mahadev Kolis immediately take steps against the person. Either they draw a little blood from the crown of his head after shaving it and make him drink water from a tannery or cut the tip of his tongue. In 1943 they punished a man declared to be a black magician from Shenit in Akola taluka by cutting the tip of his tongue. Dr. Chapekar was told that in 1953-54 a black magician from Balthan in Akola taluka was so severely beaten that even after hospital treatment he soon died. Another black-magician, one from Sakirwadi near Rajur, was similarly belaboured in recent times. Women witches are also, more or less, similarly dealt with. At Manik Ozar in 1924-25 one woman accused of being a witch was made to drink water from a shoe-maker's tannery. Much earlier, a woman from Kombhalne, suspected to be a witch, was enticed into the jungle and killed. Both the supposed male black magicians, it appears,

8. Capt. Mackintosh, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

were themselves priest-magicians. The Mahadev Kolis take it for granted that every priest-magician is a potential black magician. This conviction enhances his frightening role. For, he cannot be summarily dealt with through retaliatory justice unless and until some other priest-magician declares him to be responsible for some calamity, some accident or some evil that has befallen any individual or the village. The circumstances of the Sakirwadi case are not known. In the case from Shenit it was alleged that a non-Mahadev Koli house-holder with whom the particular Mahadev Koli was serving lost in quick succession two of his children whereupon the master suspecting his servant to have worked black magic belaboured him.

At Wanjulshet near Rajur, Dr. Chapekar was an eye-witness of a trance performance. The Mahadev Koli 'bhagat' ran out of the losal Muktabai temple with a sort of a whip in hand and lashed himself with it first on the left and then on the right side for some time. Then people began to narrate their grievances. The narration of grievances is technically known as 'vardi dene', or 'giving information'. It was about 9 A.M. in the morning and there were about thirty men and women, many of whom were simultaneously putting forward their grievances. The entranced 'bhagat'—in this condition he is called 'deva', god—asked more often than once whether he should diagnose the disease. The 'informant', properly speaking the suppliant, would say, "Bring relief; do not want diagnosis." If after this the 'deva' persisted in his original question then the 'informant' said: "Oh god, bring complete relief. If you can do it, say so; if you cannot, say no. Do not keep us in suspense or hold out false hopes." Then the 'deva' said that if there was no relief coming within the time mentioned by him, then he would 'change his name'; that is, he would be ashamed of himself. The bulk of the informants were women. They generally complained that either their children were not eating properly or were ill or that they themselves had stomach-ache or diarrhoea or some such illness. The entranced man used to mutter some incantation to the accompaniment of which he used to put up five small heaps of ash from the temple and then would ask the suffering person to pick up one of them. After this he would prescribe either similar ash or rice and less often a lemon



to be waved round the sufferer and then thrown away. In the case of one woman he prescribed that she should fast on every Tuesday. Every sufferer's name had to be announced before the 'deva' started muttering his incantation, for the name itself has to form part of the incantation. There were also grievances about cattle like cow kicking at milking or not yielding any milk and so on. At a certain stage the 'deva' stopped quivering and humming which were more or less continuous from the beginning and the people cried out, "The 'deva' has gone", that is, the trance has ceased. This put an end to the seance leaving in this particular instance a number of sufferers unattended to, and the people dispersed. The possessed man was given water by one of the company and he walked away with the small offerings of rice, copra and such other things—no fowls; they are not given at such a seance—made to him by the 'informants'. The deity that had possessed the 'bhagat' was Muktabai.

Another trance was witnessed in a suburban temple of Rajur. Fortunately Dr. Chapekar had reached there before the performance had started; and he could make note even of the preparations for, or rather the paraphernalia of, the performance. It was at 9 in the morning, and at the temple of Bhairavanath. The 'bhagat' went into the temple, poured some water on the idol, lighted a lamp, a scented stick and camphor and began to mutter some incantations. For some time nothing could happen though the temple was full of people including the diseased and complainants, altogether about thirty persons. Some of the women had brought their ailing children in their arms. Again the man tried and again there was no evidence of trance. In the light of his usual experience he declared to the gathering that a patient from a long distance had not yet arrived and that was why there was no trance. Some time thereafter three or four people arrived on the spot. This encouraged the 'bhagat' to mutter the incantations and try again. This time he found some evidence of incoming trance. He sat down on his haunches for some time humming and quivering. Then with a loud yell he took some of the temple ash in his right-hand and began to call for complaints. One after another three persons affected, it would appear, with conjunctivitis in one eye, presented themselves before him. To each one he handed a

pinchful of ash and some water mixed with ash which they drank. In each case, the entranced man moved his palm over the affected eye. Doing this he informed each one that the illness was caused by the animal food that they had eaten and asked them to abjure it in order to get cured. Then, one after the other, two infants were presented to him, both suffering from diarrhoea. Both the infants and their mothers were given ash-water. Thereafter two women who were having menstruation at frequent intervals came with their complaints. One man having stomach-ache and constipated for four days was represented by another. All of them were given the same treatment, that of the last being handed to his representative. Thereafter the entranced person enquired whether all the complaints were exhausted, and having received the reply that they were, after some heightened humming and quivering, he returned to normalcy. He was possessed by Bhairavanath of Khirwire, a famous deity among the Mahadev Kolis. His perquisites were similar to those of the Wanjulshet 'bhagat'. He is possessed on three days in the week: by Bhairavanath on Sunday, Satvai on Tuesday and Vira on Friday.

A 'bhagat' of the kind whose activities are rescribed above is called 'ghumara' because he is possessed and hums in his trance. In spite of his capacity for being possessed, however, he is less costly of approach than another type who is known as 'mantrik', literally one versed in incantations, but really one who is a magician whose power for white magic stems from his capacity for black magic. The 'ghumara bhagat' believes that his supernatural powers will decrease if he stipulates for a fee.

There are women, too, who go into trance, and when they do so they are possessed by some female godlings. But Dr. Chapekar did not come across a single one at Manik Ozar and in villages round about; and Dr. Agarkar came across only one such woman at Nimgiri.

Some 'bhagats' claim that they received their lessons in the esoteric art, from their deceased ancestors, in dreams. Soma Kachare, a 'bhagat' from Palsunde in Akola taluka, for instance, says that he was taught the incantations by his deceased grand father in a dream.

There are three separate types of approach to the deity.

each more or less peculiar to specific ones. First comes what is called the 'sath', a mode of approach which is current among another Scheduled Tribe, the Thakurs. It is more of an annual festival than a form of worship, though its purpose is benedictory for the village. The deities that receive this at Devargaon are Khanderao, Cheda, Chavata, Ranadeva, Gadadicha Deva and the goddesses Bhavani and Mariai. The 'sath' consists in offering the sacrifice of a goat, one to each godling, followed by an all-night vigil and the playing on the 'dhak' and singing. At the dawn the whole village is treated to a meal.

The other mode of approach is 'ras' which is common to godlings and spirits. At Nimgiri it is annually offered to the godling Gulambhyacha Deva, godling of the fields, who is represented there by a stone bedaubed with red lead, with the sacrifice of a ram. It is a strictly magico-religious rite whose function is both thanksgiving and perhaps also propitiatory. But 'ras' is more commonly a mode of approach to the spirits 'mavlya' and as such is common to the whole Mahadev Koli community and not attested in other Scheduled Tribes of the area. But whether for a godling or for spirits, it consists in simple sacrifice sometime in the lunar month of Margashirsha. The 'ras' for spirits as well as for the godling is done at his own expense by an individual who is generally a Patil or other privileged leader. The 'ras' for the spirits consists in the sacrifice of a goat and also of a cock. The sacrifices followed by a dinner at which at least one or two persons from every family in the village are invited. Before the 'ras' is performed paddy must not be threshed or new rice eaten.

'Panji' was reported as a mode of approach only from Nimgiri. There, it is offered significantly enough to Nava Deva, new god, who is installed in one of the 'wadis' and belongs to it. 'Panji' is more or less like 'ras', differing only in the fact that it is offered in the lunar month of Chaitra and is believed to guarantee happiness to the whole village.

This description of the religious beliefs and practices of the Mahadev Kolis may be rounded off with a brief note on some of the magico-religious beliefs and practices which condition their life.

To begin with, it is noteworthy that the Mahadev Koli possessed by the spirit of a Mahar can be freed from it by subjecting him to fumigation of a pig's bone. The Mahadev Kolis assert that it is a sovereign remedy because there is inveterate enmity between a Mahar and a pig. Evidently, the belief about this enmity is due to the fact that Mahars avoid pig and its meat. It is well-known on this side that when a wild boar is hunted by the Mahadev Kolis or others, in the village which has organised the hunt, the Mahars do not go out for the collection of breads for three days. Such is their abhorrence of pigs and boars. More or less similar reasoning has given currency to a practice about cattle. It is very essential for this community which depends so much on cattle and lives on the outskirts of jungles, that its cattle should be very docile, keeping to their herd and being amenable to the herdsman's call. In order that animals should be prone to such routine they are treated with fumigation at the beginning of every season for going out. The ingredients used for fumigation form interesting congeries. They are the root-tubers of some parasitic plants, seeds of grass collected by ants and tiger-flesh. The seeds are a collection made by small vermin like ants, and on the principle of sympathetic magic animals fumigated with them are expected to stay collected. Root-tubers of parasites, on the same principle, should incline an animal fumigated with them to depend on its herd and its keeper. Tiger-flesh, on the other hand, is included in the recipe, it is clear, on the same principle on which fumigation with the pig's bone is believed to drive out a Mahar's spirit, namely the avoidance of an antagonistic object.

Among beliefs that are likely to affect personal convenience and/or social behaviour, first stands one about declaring quantities, particularly the yield of milk. A Mahadev Koli asked about the quantity of milk that his cattle yields or he sells in the market invariably avoids to answer the question by side-tracking it. If on going out he sees a Mahar with his staff in his hand, a Mahadev Koli thinks it to be a good omen. But if while stepping out of the door his turban falls off he considers it inauspicious. Starting on an errand if he hears a jackal howling, he concludes that his mission will be successful. So strong is this belief that, if the errand is that of selling his bullocks in a

nearby market, as soon as he hears the jackal's howl, he pats his cattle in joy.

Their beliefs in dreams are more or less on the same pattern as those of other castes of the region. Things disliked in actual life, if experienced in dreams are treated as a good omen and *vice versa*. Thus laughing in dream is considered bad while weeping good. Some people, experience prognostic dreams. Someone told Vithoba Dharade of Manik Ozar, in a dream, that he would be shelterless. And the next day actually his house caught fire and was burnt down. Rongate Guruji of the same village, while serving as a primary teacher at Tirde, dreamt that he and his landlord were nursing the latter's mother who was unconscious. The land-lord at that time was at Akola on business and was not expected back home very soon. Next day the mother Jamunabai, to whom the Guruji had already communicated his dream, was kicked by a cow and fell unconscious. Almost at the very time her son returned from Akola. Naturally he and Rongate Guruji were the persons who attended to the old lady.

The Mahadev Kolis observe the eclipses with more or less the same kind of beliefs and practices as among high-caste Maharashtrians. The main difference is that with the Mahadev Kolis, along with the 'tulsi' leaf as sanctifying agent there is the 'mol' grass as the pollution-preventing agency. If this grass is kept in drinking water and in cooked food before the start of the sclipse, the water and the food can be used after the eclipse without any fear of bad consequences.

One practice of theirs, showing as it does the lack of a belief which is deep-seated among higher castes, is that they will kill cats, even though they keep them as pets, when they destroy their fowl. Two informants at Manik Ozar frankly asserted that they had killed cats. Among higher Hindu castes not only is it considered an anathema to kill a cat but even if a cat is unwittingly killed by one he is expected to go on a pilgrimage to Kashi on foot to wipe out his sin.

The food of the Mahadev Kolis mainly consists of rice and the inferior grains 'nagali' and 'vari'. As already stated they cultivate a little wheat which is reserved for use on festive days or for breaking fast. 'Jowar' and 'bajari' are used occasionally

by those who can afford to have them. The other item of their diet is a spiced and liquid preparation of some pulse. To this is added in the beginning of the rainy season the dried 'Bombay duck' bartered against corn from the itinerant hawker and stocked. Later in the season fresh fish caught in rivers nearby is used. In fair season only dried 'Bombay ducks', occasional small game, mutton, deer and wild boar are added whenever possible. Some kind of vegetables, however wild and fairly unpalatable with various aids, is a substitute for pulse for those who cannot afford the luxury of pulse.

'Papad' made of black gram and 'vade' or fritters of 'kulith' grain are their usual preserves. 'Papads' are prepared in the lunar month of Phalgun and are generally finished by Jesht. The fritters are prepared in the lunar month of Vaishakh and are carried through Shravan and Bhadrapad that is almost to the end of the rainy season. Both the savouries for use are required to be fried in oil. The former is appreciated if crisp and is rejected if turned soft as that indicates the setting in of rot. In the Mahadev Koli way of preparation, or because of the manner of stocking and the intensity of the moisture, the savoury goes soft with them by the end of Jesht at the latest. Similarly the other savoury begins to rot by the end of Bhadrapad. Of plain vegetables, excepting a few jack-fruit and fewer 'shevagas', drumsticks, there are hardly any other. I have stated in another connection the experiments in the cultivation of modern vegetables at Devargaon which, if and when successful, will provide a modicum of these to the local people.

The inhibitions about food on the score of ceremonial purity are more or less like those of Kunbis and other castes. While taking their meals females, as in Kunbi and other communities, do so apart and after the males have dined. Neither the males nor the females, not only in family dinners but even in caste dinners, mind picking up from, or put down into, each other's plate, their food. Generally, one pot for drinking water passes round among many dinners. In view of the general laxity about not only ceremonial purity but even personal hygiene, it is noteworthy that menstruating women are not permitted to take milk and buttermilk. They are also prohibited from eating onion; and the plate on which such women are served is of

bronze which not being tinned is generally considered to be unpollutable.

Of the birds, they do not eat parrot, 'maina' and cuckoo but eat pigeon, 'lahuri'<sup>9</sup> 'vhala'.<sup>10</sup> The last they call Mang and discard is head in the jungle. They also eat peacock, tortoise, iguana and porcupine but not the squirrel. For the fish they do not seem to have any inhibition. There are five main varieties of it and they eat all. They are named, in the ascending order of their size, 'murya', 'keng', 'malya', 'marhel' and 'aher'.<sup>11</sup>

Only mango pickle is prepared but is finished off by the time the rains start. They use 'masala', spices, more or less of the same kind as other people, but call it 'sauda'.

Their principal special dishes, the sweets for a festive dinner, are, in the descending order of their importance, 'puranpoli', 'dhonde', 'malapova' and 'ghavan'. The 'puranpoli' is a well-known Maharashtrian dish served at every vedictory dinner and the specific sweet for the Holi festival. The stuffing of this sweet is formed by gram pulse cooked, mashed and mixed with jaggery and some fragrant spices. It is in the matter of the last ingredient that the Mahadev Koli preparation differs from that in general vogue. They mix a little dried ginger for flavouring instead of cardamom. Another difference not necessarily conditioned by the availability of local materials is that the Mahadev Kolis relish the dish most when taken with mango juice. Outside the mango season, as for example at the Holi festival, they do not like to eat it dry and, more often than not, use jaggery-water as the complement. This last mode of eating 'puranpoli' is very much wider in distribution in Maharashtra than the Mahadev Koli area. It is met with even in Brahmin families in the villages as for example in Haveli taluka of Poona district. 'Dhonde' are also known to Maharashtra, and is the specific dish of the intercalary month known from this dish as the 'dhonda' month. It is a preparation of cooked but unmash-

9. A sort of quail (*perdix chinensis*).

10. Ringed turtle (*turtur cambayensis*).

11. Fish-catching among them presents one special feature which may be mentioned. This is the method of catching fish by using curds as the bait. An earthenware plate is besmeared with curds and placed in shallow water and when fish congregate there it is lifted up. Fish of the smaller variety is caught in this way usually by women.

ed gram pulse well kneaded with jaggery encased with wheat flour pastry and fried in oil. 'Malapova' is slightly different from the standard preparation of that name. The Mahadev Koli preparation is a kind of pan-cake of wheat flour mixed with jaggery and fried in oil. 'Chavan' is made of rice flour as all over Maharashtra.

Mahadev Koli women are fairly adept in preparing 'puran-polis', so avers Dr. Agarkar who had occasion to eat them more than once; but they do not know, at least the women of Manik Ozar, how to prepare the usual preparation of samolina called 'shira' or 'sanja'. One young lady from a well-to-do family actually approached the cook of Dr. Chapekar to have this preparation made for her. The other well-known sweet dish of Maharashtra is 'shrikhand', a semi-solid preparation prepared from curds. It is so foreign to them that during his stay at Manik Ozar, when Dr. Chapekar gave a cupful of it to a girl she tasted it and discarded it for a piece of stale bread. A third well-known sweet dish very much liked, whenever it can be afforded, but invariably present in marriage dinners in Maharashtra, is 'bundiche ladu', sweet balls of 'bundis', that is gram flour puffs. Among the Mahadev Kolis it figures as a sweet preferably to be distributed at one of the preliminaries of marriage. But the 'ladus' prepared for them by the town confectioner have jaggery as the binding material and not the standard sugar. One more sweet very much prized but never prepared by them—and here I must add that it is a preparation which is not generally ventured upon by ladies of even high caste families of Maharashtra—is 'jilebi'. When they have occasion to go to town, for marketing or on some business and when they visit a restaurant there, they preferably buy it.

Omlette of hen's eggs is the most prized hospitality-dish. An important guest always expects it and generally gets it.

The daily menu of diet is very restricted. At the dawn or in the early morning they generally eat bread of 'nagali' or 'vari', either freshly prepared or left over from the previous evening, with some complement of cooked pulse, vegetable or fish. At 1 or 2 in the afternoon they have another helping of identical items. The principal meal is the evening one and is taken about sundown after a bath. It is expected to con-



sist of cooked rice and some curry with or without the addition of some fish or vegetables. Whenever any animal food is available it is generally reserved for this principal meal, for this is the one meal which the Mahadev Kolis take in relaxation. It is also at this meal that members of the family get together. When males work on the fields, the afternoon meal is taken to them by their women-folk or children.

Tea-drinking is far from common as yet among the Mahadev Kolis. At least it has not become a general consumable item of daily routine. At Manik Ozar not even ten per cent of the families prepare and drink tea daily and those who do so drink it only once in the morning. In the bazaar or at home tea does form an item of hospitality. The Mahadev Koli tea like that of Kunbis and similar castes is made with jaggery and not sugar and may contain milk in any quantity available, even sheep's milk being used.

Marketing and selling if they are not local—and for most of the villages they are not, particularly for selling — bring the members of the community from a number of villages to the market down on the bazaar day which is a fixed one. These activities thus become a focus of social solidarity, though it involves inconvenience to the residents of villages where there is no shop at all. The village of Manik Ozar does not have a single shop. So, too, a number of other villages round about. The result is that on every Monday a number of Mahadev Kolis, among them a member of the Assembly, members of the Local Boards and other well-to-do and educated persons of the group crowd in the small market-place of Rajur. The villagers buy their provisions of kerosene, sweet oil, copra oil, jaggery, condiments and spices, salt, matches, areca-nut and tobacco. Those from the same village tend to form a group and a company, particularly while returning home. At Ningiri there is a local grocer's shop at which all the things mentioned above and many others are available. Visits to Junnar, which is ten miles away, therefore are infrequent. The Raval shop-owner informed Dr. Agarkar that his monthly sales average a little over hundred rupees. Devargaon, the biggest of the three villages, having a few Teli households, is provided with five shops, three grocery and provision ones and two cloth-cum-tailoring. All of them

are owned by Telis. Hardly, therefore, is there any need for the Kolis of Devargaon to go to their official market town except for occasional selling. Yashwant Shixram Devargaonkar, a Teli aged over 70 informed Dr. Agarkar that in his grandfather's time Devargaon used to have a weekly market on Monday and that a few years before his birth it fell into desuetude.

Of the eighty-two Mahadev Koli villages round about Rajur only four possess 'chavadis' or offices for the local revenue assistants, and Manik Ozar is not one of them. Only the towns of Rajur, Kotul and the village of Bari have each a 'dharmashala' or rest-house. As stated earlier, the local temple serves the purpose of a 'chavadi', a 'dharmashala', a school, etc. At Nimgiri, the local 'chavadi' has been turned into a school and there is no 'dharmashala'. At Devargaon, there is no 'chavadi'. Of the three villages only Devargaon has a village panchayat started during the year of investigation. But the absence of village panchayat does not necessarily mean less social solidarity. As the village population is predominantly Mahadev Koli the caste panchayat almost fulfils the functions of a village panchayat. For example, at Nimgiri where there is no official village panchayat five Mahadev Koli leaders have managed to keep the village people from getting into litigation in court except in few cases of serious complaints involving land, etc. Even when there is no such standing arrangement of a caste panchayat, the thirteenth day of the obsequies of any Mahadev Koli is invariably a day of counting for them, when all outstanding complaints are brought before the gathering.<sup>12</sup> Such is the fixed routine that the official dinner for the obsequies cannot start until and unless all the complains are disposed of.

Sexual misconduct in general, and seduction in particular, is the main field of complaints. That those who seduce married women take them to the urban centres like Bombay and Mulund, which are beyond the reach of the rural panchayats, is an important cause of the decline of such cases. Infringement of traditional taboos about social behaviour with members of other castes, particularly those considered by the Mahadev Kolis as

12. It must be borne in mind, as stated later, that this day is a great occasion for Mahadev Kolis who gather together for the function from a number of nearby villages.

lower than themselves, used to engage the attention of the panchayat so far. But with the weakening of these taboos such cases do not come up for discussion. Fine sanctioned by an implied threat of boycott is the main punishment. The amount of fine is almost always paid cash down. Women do not take part or attend a panchayat unless the presence of one is necessary for the sake of her evidence, in which case the caste constable is specially sent to summon her.

Today the panchayat refrains from attending to cases of the above-described nature as far as possible and when it does so, rather than approaching the problem with a threatening attitude, it tries to offer a piece of advice, patch up things and strike a compromise. The modern turn in the affairs of the panchayat is mainly of a constructive nature. It tries to set normative rules of behaviour for the castemen to follow in their social functions as, for example, fixing a uniform bride-price and laying down a rule that the bride's father's mother should be given an ordinary sari and not cash in lieu of it which many times used to be exorbitant.

The hold of the caste panchayat can be judged by the fact that at Devergaon where the official village panchayat is in existence for about a year, the following cases were taken, during its existence, to the caste panchayat at Devargaon. The kind of complaints brought forward and the nature of justice given provide perhaps the best approach to the understanding of social life in a Mahadev Koli village, when taken together with descriptions of other occasions for collective and co-operative activity to be described later and in the chapter on festivals and recreation. Here is a case of an uncle and a nephew about a certain piece of land which each of them contended was his. The panchayat decision did not satisfy them and matters came to a head. The panchayat fearing grave consequences acted promptly and through a Magistrate got both parties locked up for a day and to provide security for good conduct. Somehow or other this procedure, at least temporarily, stopped the feud. In another case, the daughter of a local Koli, who was married to a Koli at Ladachi, used to leave her husband's place and

return to her father frequently. The woman's father-in-law brought the complaint to the 'panchas' who decreed that the girl's father should return whatever ornaments and clothes she had brought from her father-in-law, and the matter should be settled. This decision represents the general attitude towards marital complaints. Wounded respect and consequent non-interference are the usual mild methods of asserting the authority of the 'panchas'. Thus a father-in-law drove out his son's widow charging her of bad character and the woman put in a complaint with the police. The taluka Magistrate found the father-in-law not guilty. Thereafter both the woman and the man appealed to the 'panchas', as children were involved. The 'panchas', pointing out that the parties had already appealed to government agency for justice, declared that they would not interfere. A constituted panchayat has better rights and stands up for them as it transpired in a case adjudicated upon by the panchayat at Devargaon. A daughter of a Koli of Ladachi village married to a Koli at Devargaon was abducted by a Mahar of Ladachi. When the matter was reported to the 'panchas', they found that her husband had taken her back. They decreed that he, the husband, be debarred from communal dinners. The man led a suit against the 'panchas'. The Superintendent of Police investigated the matter on the spot and dismissed the man's complaint, on the panchayat successfully pleading its authority to take action. The 'panchas' thereafter decreed total excommunication of the man who dared to proceed against them. A Koli from the village Ganga-Mahalungi seduced a married Koli woman and had intercourse with her. When the case came before the 'panchas' for adjudication, the man nonchalantly declared that he did cohabit with a 'cow'. The 'panchas' were shocked to hear his words because cow is the mother of all and without further argumentation straightway excommunicated him and laid a fine of one hundred rupees for anyone who would associate with him or use such profane words. The people of Ganga-Mahalungi did not respect this decision. They extracted a dinner from the offender, evidently as a prelude to full social intercourse. But thereafter they did not keep up any intercourse. The complaint went to the 'panchas' who decreed that the whole village shall be excluded from community dinners; and the stalemate continues.

A man took away a 'dholaki', a small drum, from people living in that part of the village called the upper lane contending that it belonged to him. The people of the upper lane brought a complaint to the 'panchas'. The decision of the 'panchas', a common one in such cases of small objects being in dispute, was that there should be no quarrel because both sides can use the drum and should so use it. The people of one 'wadi' of Devargaon were caught by the people of the village of Vele while stealing away their mangoes. The complaint came to the 'panchas' who fined the culprits from their 'wadi' full amount of the price of the mangoes would have fetched when ripe.

The complaints so far described are those within the community of the Mahadev Kolis. They reflect the kind of social problems that the individuals and their community are faced with and the kind of solution and rapprochement the panchayat offers and the people accept. Other communities are not involved in them. I shall now describe a few cases which are complaints in which other communities figure. Of the other communities living as co-residents of Mahadev Kolis in the upland areas, leaving out the comparatively advanced caste of Telis, are the Scheduled Tribes of Konknas and Thakurs and the Scheduled Caste of Mahars. In one complaint brought before the Panchayat of Devargaon, a Mahar of Devargaon was charged with having killed by poisoning a he-buffalo of a Koli. The 'panchas' having proved the accusation to the Mahars explained that henceforward they would not be allowed to skin cattle and to appropriate the hides. The Mahars pleaded for sympathetic consideration. They promised to pay the full price of the animal and the 'panchas' agreed to continue the practice about skinning and the appropriation of hides by the Mahars. The amount of seventy rupees which was fixed as the price of the buffalo was not paid till the time of the enquiry. The Mahar who had actually poisoned the animal had absconded even before the matter came before the panchayat and has not till returned to the village. Till recently this used to be one of the very common complaints in the Koli villages and very rarely did the local Mahars accept the accusation and agree to pay compensation as in this case. In another case a Koli brought a complaint against a few

Mahars of the village. The Koli finding some Mahar women cutting and taking away grass from his own land tried to snatch away the grass-loads when their husbands, the Mahars in the case, threatened to beat him. He fled and then lodged a complaint against the Mahars. The 'panchas' called those Mahars and fined not only the accused, but also the complainant, four annas each. The third complaint is the most interesting of all being illustrative of the dynamics of the social life of this area in general. Some Mahars of Devargaon skinning a dead buffalo took away with the hide its flesh too. Other Mahars of the village not liking the action tried to remonstrate with them and there occurred a fight between the two factions. The matter came before the 'panchas'. The section of the Mahars who took objection had done so because they liked that their community should prove itself to be clean in the eyes of their neighbours, abjuring flesh of dead animals. The 'panchas' admonished the offending section of the Mahars and harangued them on the need to abjure dead animals' flesh, if they desired to be treated well by the Kolis and other residents of the place. With this general exhortation the complaint was considered to have been fully adjudicated.

Almost every village has a 'bhajan' group (Pl. 8), the three villages specifically mentioned having each at least one such group of Mahadev Kolis in which at Manik Ozar the other communities like Mahars and Chambhars join. At Nimgiri the 'bhajan' group does not include the Mahars of the place. At Devargaon, too, where all other castes join the 'brajan' group, the Mahars are excluded.

Another more or less regular activity of a collective and a co-operative nature is centred round athletics and the 'akhada', the gymnasium. But as is known to any social investigator and sociologist it has also a tendency to be a factious focus. In the Mahadev Koli villages of Nimgiri and Devargaon, there being only one 'akhada' in each, its latter propensities have had no scope. The third activity which is more seasonal than regular that requires collective and co-operative effort is in the line of aesthetics, namely 'tamasha'. Manik Ozar has no 'tamasha' troupe. Nimgiri has one, which is very well known not only in the area but even outside. Here the musicians of the 'tama-

sha' group are Mahars. At Devargaon there are four or five such troupes of which at least two are formed by Mahadev Kolis and one each by Konkanas and Mahars.

For many other occasional needs, the Mahadev Kolis of these areas have shown capacity for collective and co-operative enterprise. I have already mentioned how the people of Ningiri have provided themselves with tap-water. In any agricultural operation which is beyond the capacity of a single household, willing co-operation is known to be forthcoming. Generally the participants have to be fed twice daily when they are at work. No other remuneration is either demanded or given but reciprocity is both expected and offered.

Besides agricultural operations, hunting, particularly of the wild boar, calls for a collective effort. Shortly after the beginning of the rains, both as a matter of tactics and as of practical economics, a boar-hunt is organised. The affair is not as exciting as it would appear on the face of it because the hunt is more or less a fairly wasteful trapping. There is no evidence that bow and arrow has been a weapon used by the Mahadev Kolis. They seem to have sported the spear instead. For the boar hunt, a few men join together and select a spot which in their experience is likely to be visited by boars and dig a fairly deep pit there. At the bottom they firmly plant a few spears of stiff wood and cover the top of the pit with some flimsy material and place on it some bait. The boar running for the bait drops down on the stakes and is impaled. The party of the Mahadev Kolis that was in waiting then makes for the pit and, if need be, uses their cudgels and take away the kill which provides them with a feast of rare delicacy.

The personal habits of the Mahadev Kolis, it may be said in a general way, are neither very affable and sociable nor very much the contrary. Areca-nut and tobacco are the general sociable agencies in the village. Passing round of areca-nut or of tobacco is the prelude to small talk leading on to more intimate one. Among the Mahadev Kolis areca-nut chewing is not very common and as for tobacco for smoking no 'hukka' is met with among them. Its place is taken by a straight pottery pipe. It is a contraption in the use of which a wet piece

of cloth is generally used and has to be put to the mouth. With the existing ideas of ceremonial purity, it is next to impossible that it would be passed on to anybody except a caste-man. It is only when 'bidis' are smoked that they may be shared as social amenities for mutual contact. Among the Mahadev Kolis, however, smoking of tobacco is common in the Konkan area; but in the areas particularly chosen for investigation, chewing of tobacco is more common than smoking. So the socialising power of tobacco as between different castes of these areas is not only operative but even more so than smoking, at least some forms of it. It is seen perhaps at its highest in the fact that tobacco is offered even by the father to his son. The more recent vogue in the use of tobacco is that of snuffing. Its potentiality in this line of socialising intercourse is limited for as yet the habit is restricted to the educated people of the younger generation and, if anything, emphasises the cleavage. Among the women-folk neither smoking, snuffing nor chewing of tobacco is customary. Their indulgence in tobacco extends to the use of scorched tobacco as a dentifrice. They are getting so addicted to it that it is not an infrequent sight to see a married Mahadev Koli woman take out this powder from her small tin container and engage in the operation of massaging her teeth and gums with it, even five or six times a day. And the practice is steadily on the increase. The socialising agency among women is most of all provided by their activity of drawing and fetching water from the village well. The village well, however, in the summer months, tends to act as a dividing agency when the water-supply becomes scarce and the demand on it ever more insistent. In the field of folk-songs they start on a collective enterprise at the time of transplanting and harvesting and at birth and marriage rites, whenever invited. At the time of worshipping the smallpox deities which occurs either after an attack of smallpox or after vaccination, it is the males who sing the relevant songs.

Between the Thakurs and the Mahadev Kolis apart from their physical appearance which, as described above, distinguishes them, there are a number of other observable differences. The nose ornaments of their women are distinctive. Whereas a Koli woman, in conformity with the general Maharashtrian practice, bedecks her nose with a nose-ring, the Thakur woman



of this area uses only a star, called 'lavang' or clove. The Thakur woman has a large number of bangles on her forearms some of them being of brass; the number of the bangles of a Koli woman is more or less like that of a Kunbi woman, hardly ever there being a brass bangle. The hair on the head of a Thakur man are allowed to grow long. The Koli, on the other hand, keeps his head shaved but preserves his top-knot in good trim. A Koli will carry his burden on the head while a Thakur from this area will carry it on his back. A Thakur is generally very dull. If he is given a four-anna piece he finds it difficult to accept it as equivalent to four separate anna pieces, and insists on having the latter. He is obstinate and likes to keep to himself. So say Mahadev Kolis about these simple neighbours of theirs. They are however no less pronounced in their opinion about and attitude to the militant and the strongly organised community of the Mahars. They dub the latter as fops who will try to be fashionable when they have no food to eat. The standard description of beau or a belle is that he or she is like a Mahar. They allow them, however, to come into their houses and squat in the outer apartment, and in the temples they permit their children to go for schooling. It should be borne in mind that it is an old custom still regularly followed that at the start of the bridegroom's procession for marriage a Mahar woman has to present him with a silken waist-cord. But for religious worship or in the 'bhajan' group they are not admitted into the temple or to the membership of the group. In the last, particularly in some places like Manik Ozar and Jamsar, Chambhars and Mahars were found among such groups.

Their attitude towards their own solidarity, or in the alternative integration with another caste-community, is shown by the reactions not only of ordinary Mahadev Kolis but even of some of the cousins of the Raja of Jawhar to his marriage with the sister of the high-caste Maratha Raja of Jat. "Marriage with a non-Mahadev Koli woman is an anathema", they said.

## BIRTH AND DEATH

At the appearance of the first menses, a girl tries to avoid her condition from being widely known. If the mother be near, she confides only to her. As a result of freedom from any rigorous taboo, women in menses are not easy to make out. There are at least two beliefs which take notice of this freedom. When women go in a team for fishing, failure to catch fish is attributed to one of the participants being in menses. At the annual Katha fair at Sakirwadi in Akola taluka of Ahmednagar district, failure of a devotee to complete his usual rounds of circumambulations is also taken to be due to the defiling presence of such a woman. Although full freedom is the rule, there appears to be some change taking place. Women in some families are not allowed to milk cows and buffaloes during the period, and they do not eat onions, milk-products or milk. Some informants suggested that this taboo is a recent innovation and seems to be neither widespread nor strict. The authors of the Bombay Gazetteer writing in 1884, about the Mahadev Kolis from Ahmednagar district have recorded that "when a girl comes of age she sits apart for three days, is bathed on the fourth and her lap is filled with rice and cocoanut."<sup>1</sup> This record is quite inconsistent with the prevailing practice of avoiding the condition from being known. Moreover, people have not known nor have they heard of such restrictions and rites prevailing in the community any time in the past. In Mulund, a cosmopolitan satellite town of Bombay, some women in the condition under discussion observe seclusion. The practice was explained to be due to the influence of neighbours in whose eyes freedom from such restrictions is a sign of backwardness.

As a rule a pregnant woman is given whatever food she desires for. This privileged treatment results from a belief, common in this region, that the woman's discontent has an un-

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1. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XVII, p. 206.

desirable effect on the child in her womb. She is, however, advised to abstain from abnormally hot or hard-to-digest stuff, particularly in summer, as such food is believed to develop ear-trouble in her child. A pregnant woman might wade through a shallow river but might not cross the river in a ferry or use any other contrivance to do so. She is not to officiate as a 'karavali', that is the bride's companion accompanying her with the auspicious pot. She is not considered eligible for receiving the gifts of grain and cloth of the 'lap-filling' ceremony, nor is she to play the host in such a ceremony. She is not to pay a condolence visit to a bereaved family, unless she has an opportunity to do so, or at least to have seen a funeral procession, during the course of her first pregnancy. There are also some restrictions on the behaviour of the husband. He might not kill fish or a serpent. He might participate in obsequies, but not carry a corpse to burial ground or offer water to the dead. Modern youths are found ignoring these taboos treating them as superstitious and irrational, and proclaiming that their unconventional behaviour has done them no harm.

A lullaby frequently sung by Mahadev Koli women describes the progress of pregnancy: paleness of the first month, awareness of the existence of the child in embryo and nausea of the third, longing for delicacies of the sixth. There are some indications pointing to the sex of the child-to-be. Thus, weakness and pallid expression of the woman are the signs of a male child while better health points to a female child. Her likes and dislikes are also similarly interpreted. Predilection for 'dodka' vegetable is taken to indicate a female issue while that for pumpkin a male one. A son is always coveted; he is described in songs as much more valuable than wealth.

The first delivery of a woman usually takes place at the house of her parents-in-law. Many people, particularly elderly men and, more so, women, do not know definitely either the place or even the year of their birth. At Manik Ozar, of the seventy people about whom definite information was available only thirteen were born in the house of their mother's parents.

A woman continues to do her routine work till the pains of child-birth make that impracticable. There have been cases

of women who were delivered in a forest where they had gone to bring firewood. Theoretically there is no restriction on sexual intercourse either before or after parturition. Two or three husbands reported to Dr. Chapekar that they had intercourse on the night previous to the birth. A woman told Dr. Chapekar that she heard her friend speaking at the village well that her husband could not leave her alone even for the first twelve days after her parturition. When a woman feels birth pains she repairs to an inner chamber in the house and a midwife is sent for. But many times the house is only an one-apartment construction. In such cases, men and children leave the house to allow women full privacy. In every predominantly Mahadev Koli village there are women of this community who are reputed for their skill in midwifery. The services of one of them are adequate in normal cases of delivery. In difficult cases, experienced midwives from other castes, including the Scheduled Castes, are called in.

The woman lies for her delivery on the floor, no cot being used.<sup>2</sup> Doors are closed to avoid breeze which, if the parturient woman is exposed to it, is believed to develop rheumatic pain in her. At Jawhar and the adjoining area, the midwife serves the mother and her child for fivedays. She massages and bathes them once a day and washes their clothes during this period. Sesamum oil is used for massaging and washing soap for bathing. Formerly gram flour was rubbed on the body in place of soap. For her services she receives about a seer (two lbs.) of grain every day, and eight annas in cash on the last day. She is honoured on that day when at a 'lap-filling' ceremony she is offered some rice and copra. In Akola and Igatpuri taluka, the midwife attends to the mother in the same way but for twelve days. On the first day she receives a copra-half and about four annas in cash. On the twelfth day she is again given a rupee. One rupee is the standard payment in the area, although some well-to-do family might give her a piece of bodice-cloth as a gift. At Devargaon and the adjoining villages in Nasik district the payment is from annas eight to a rupee, although the well-to-do do give the midwife a sheet of cloth,

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2. *Bombay Gazetteer* records the use of cot, Vol. XVII, p. 202.

particularly in difficult cases. When a non-Koli midwife attends on the first day, she usually holds on only until the woman is safely delivered. All the subsequent work during the first few days is then done by some elderly woman in the house, usually the mother or the mother-in-law of the woman. For her work, the non-Koli midwife receives a rupee on the fifth day.

As the news of the impending delivery spreads in the village, women gather in the house of the parturient woman to advise and help the members of her family. When the woman has delivered and bathed these women are each given a coprahalf and some grain, at a lap-filling ceremony.

There are experienced midwives who manipulate the foetus to facilitate delivery. Women do not deal with a dead foetus. That is taken to be a man's job; and it is reported that there are male experts who cut the foetus and free the woman. The umbilical cord is cut with a sickle. Some midwives keep a special small-size sickle for this purpose. But the practice is not common. Before use, the sickle is worshipped with an offering of turmeric and vermilion powders, some rice and an anna. The mother keeps the sickle by her side till the twelfth day when it is washed and removed. The placenta is buried in the bath-pit. There are two varieties of the pit where water with which the mother and the child are bathed is directed for twelve days. One is called 'vahati nahani', that is flowing drain and the other, 'kondan nahani', the enclosed drain. 'Kondan nahani' is more common. Only in some families, it is said, that there is a custom for the use of the 'vahati nahani'. No family was found to be using the 'vahati nahani' as a family tradition. Some who used it explained the practice as due to modern influence. Placenta is buried either at the first sunrise or at sundown after cutting by the midwife. The pit is closed on the twelfth day after cooked rice is put in it as an offering.

When parturition is delayed so as to cause anxiety and the case is feared to be serious the help of a 'bhagat' is solicited. In addition to the esoteric charms of the 'bhagat' there are herbal prescriptions which are believed to be efficacious in such serious cases. The 'bhagat' first squeezes a tuber of the 'kala-lavi' plant and then with his moist hands holds those of the

woman. Another prescription is to put a piece of the root of 'ruī' plant in a leaf of the same plant and tie the packet to the woman's hair. The effect is said to be instant, so much so that if the herb is not removed immediately after the woman is delivered, it is feared to lead to the prolapsus of the uterus. The efficacy of these methods was vouched by a local physician from Manik Ozar and also by a carpenter from Mulund.<sup>3</sup>

If death occurs in a family in which there is a pregnant woman, the dead member is expected to be reborn as the woman's child. A mark is made with turmeric or vermilion, on the face, forehead or on one of the feet of the dead body before it is removed from the house, and when the child is born in the family it is examined for the mark to ascertain if it is the deceased reborn. There are other indications which point to a recently deceased relative reappearing in the family as the new-born child. Vithu Moje of Manik Ozar lost his brother who died of small-pox. About a month later, his wife gave birth to a son who caught small-pox within twelve days of his birth. The child was carried to a temple and a 'bhagat' was called to diagnose the case. The 'bhagat' ascertained that it was Vithu's brother reappearing in the world as the child and, promising the deity that the child would be treated as its uncle re-born, prayed that it might be freed from the attack. The child soon recovered and when the almanac was referred to by the family astrologer, the child was found to get the same name as that of his deceased uncle. From another indication another child in the same family was diagnosed to be its uncle re-born. The infant was sucking only from one breast until it was addressed by the name of the deceased uncle. Curiously enough the astrological lore of the priest gave out the same name for the child. It is quite common to address a child crying incessantly by the names of the recently deceased members of the family one by one.\* If the child stops crying at the

3. A bit of the root of 'chitrak' plant of the red variety tied in a piece of cloth and placed in the vagina is reported to be an efficacious prescription for abortion. The physician of Manik Ozar who supplied this information said that he had no personal experience about the use of this herb and its efficacy because, although his help was solicited for securing an abortion on a couple of occasions, he refused to associate in an activity so grossly sinful.

pronouncement of a particular name, the child is believed to be the incarnation of the relative of that name and, thenceforward, is addressed by that name. Rebirth is also indicated by the identity of that name of the child, based on its astrological scheme, with that of a deceased person.

Twins are said to be rare. Actually there is none on my record. The Kolis assert that twins with a common placenta do not survive. Abnormal children are called 'viparya' (a corrupt form of 'viparit', the Marathi word for abnormal). Such children are born with teeth or with long hair on the head. They are either still-born or have to be cut and removed to save the mother's life.

When a woman gives birth to a daughter, the threshold of her house is plastered with cow-dung by her husband's sister. This is considered to be the registration of her demand for the new-born girl as a bride for her son. On the fifth day she draws on the threshold a line with ash to prevent evil spirits from entering the house and harming the baby.

As soon as the child is born, cold water is sprinkled over it to 'awaken' it. This sprinkling is called 'opsavni'. The midwife pats the head and the nose of the child to give them proper shape and then bathing the mother and the child in warm water leaves them to rest. If the midwife is a Mahadev Koli woman, she takes a bath on the first and the fifth days. Her clothes on these two days are washed by the women of the family. The mother starts suckling the child only from the fourth day. Normally the child needs no feeding during this period, but if it cries and seems hungry it is given water mixed with molasses. Infants that have lost their mothers are fed on goat's or cow's milk or, when practicable, by an obliging neighbouring woman who acts as a wet-nurse.

If the mother has not enough supply of milk, 'bajri' flour cooked with 'katbol' is fed to the mother. If on the other hand, there is an overflow of it, they apply to the breasts a paste made with the flour of 'raybhog' variety of rice which soon decreases the supply. The child is fed at the breast even for four years depending on the onset of the next pregnancy.

All visitors sprinkle some drops of cow's urine on their

feet before entering the lying-in room as a precaution against evil spirits trying to enter with them.

For the first five days, the mother eats cooked 'sava' or 'vari' grain or wheat flour boiled in ghee with molasses. She eats 'bajri', if that grain is available. Some women during their subsequent confinements restrict themselves to the grain which they had eaten at the time of their first confinement. They are afraid that their family deities will resent any change in their diet. Meat and fish are forbidden during this period. The stirabout of one of the aforesaid grains that the mother is fed on for the first five days is called 'pat', a corrupt form of the Sanskrit word 'pathya' meaning salutary. Copra and molasses are also given to the mother twice a day, as they are taken to be nourishing food. After five days she eats rice and curry of 'tur' pulse. This food she takes for four to six weeks. Chicken and eggs are also given for nourishment in this period.

The goddess Sati is worshipped on the fifth day. The function is called Satipujan, the worship of Sati or, in the alternative, Panchavi, that is, the fifth-day festival. The mother and the child do not bathe on this day. During the first five months, the child is not bathed also on the day of the week on which it was born. On this fifth day, the parents present to their daughter's parents-in-law dried dates, copra oil, jaggery and some other provisions. In the evening the midwife moves the mother's bed from the place where it lay for five days to another place in the lying-in room and moves the child from the right side of the mother, where it had been so far, to her left. She then plasters with cow-dung a small area near the mother's bed for the worship and then takes a bath. Thereafter, she prepares by steaming five breads of 'nagali' flour and cooks some wheat or gram. The latter are called 'ghugrya' and are distributed to guests in celebration of the child-birth, the practice being common to all Hindu communities in the Marathi-speaking area.<sup>4</sup> She then places some husked 'sava' grain in two small heaps on the plastered portion of the floor. These heaps represent deities. Turmeric and vermilion powders are sprinkled on the heaps and five balls of cooked rice and molasses,

4. The use of wheat in this manner and context is a peculiarity of the Mahadev Kolis.



placed on well-spread grass in front of them. The mother takes a ball and molasses and offers a part to the bath-pit, keeping the rest back in its place. She then does obeisance to the deities after which she and the midwife dine. Eleven small human figures are then drawn on the wall two at the head of the mother's bed, two at the foot of it, one on each side of the entrance, two on the side walls and three near the bath-pit. The figure is called 'bahula' or 'bali' and its body is drawn with lamp-black and the head with red lead. A stalk of hemp and a strut of the prickly pear are placed vertically near each of these figures. The figures are worshipped in the usual way. The offering consists of milk and curds, and a fish and a crab. One from each of these two pairs must be offered. Sometimes men have to walk a good deal before a crab can be secured. At the time of the worship the midwife ties a piece of orris root with a coloured string and puts it round the neck of the mother who wears it till the twelfth day. Coloured strings are also tied on the child's wrists. Its maternal uncle presents the child new clothes; and it is dressed in them, for the first time on this day. Relatives and friends are feasted and entertained on this occasion. The figures with the accompaniments are later removed on the twelfth day. Hereafter the mother eats 'ajwa' with copra every day for about a month.

The deities represented by the 'sava' heaps are removed the next morning, that is on the sixth day, by the midwife. Special invitation has to be sent to her for this purpose. The deities are worshipped for the last time by the midwife who then removes, carries home and uses the grain that represented the deities. At the time of the worship the midwife holds the child over the fuming incense to purify it and ensure it against all evil.

In Devargaon and the adjoining villages the midwife places a twig each of mango, plum, the glomerous fig tree, 'rui' and 'sabar' at the two sides of the entrance, on the fifth day. The cooked gram or 'ghugrya' are distributed on the seventh day at the 'satora' ceremony to which all women excluding widows are invited. Each guest brings with her a handful of some grain, usually rice or 'nagali', and puts it in a basket placed by

the host for the purpose in the house. The child is then placed on the corn in the basket.

In Ambegaon, Junnar and the neighbouring areas in Poona district the grinding stone in the house is worshipped on the fifth day. An offering of rice and curds is made to it. A lamp which is a stone receptacle with oil and wick in it is lighted at the time of the worship. In Jawhar taluka some use a grinding stone and others, a winnowing fan.

The mother worships the well when she goes there to fetch water for the first time after her parturition. The worship known as 'barav-puja', that is 'worship of the well' is usually done on the twelfth day. It might, however, be done any time during the first month. She first offers rice to the well and then draws ten vertical lines on the inner wall, five with turmeric and five with vermilion. She makes obeisance to the well and returns home with a well-cleaned pot filled with water.

The worship of 'panch pavli' represents the worship of the family god and is performed sometime before the child begins to move or crawl. 'Panch pavli' means 'five steps'. For practical difficulties, the parents cannot take their child to the temple of the family god and therefore they console themselves by walking 'five steps' in the direction of the temple and offering worship there. For the worship, the family moves outside the village in the direction of the temple of the family god and selecting a clean spot places on the ground five small stones which represent the family god and his associate deities. The stones are washed and turmeric and vermilion, put on them. The offering consists of rice and molasses. Incense is burnt and the child held over the fumes for a while. The mother makes obeisance, copra is distributed and the party returns home. It may be noted that 'panch pavli' is dispensed with when the worship is offered to the family god in its temple.

The naming ceremony is not a traditional item of Mahadev Koli culture. Even the practice of consulting the astrologer-cum-priest for referring to the almanac for a name for the child is not very old. So convinced are some of the people of the newness of the naming ceremony that they assert about themselves as not having gone through the ceremony for the

names that they bear. Consulting the almanac is much in vogue now and the formal name-giving ceremony, similar to the one observed by the neighbouring communities, is gaining in popularity, particularly in the urban and semi-urban areas. The function is more social in nature than religious and friends are invariably feasted. Today, educated Mahadev Kolis are found here and there who use an almanac and select the right name for those who approach them for it. Names based on some characteristic of the child or on the day of the week on which it was born are common. Parents who lose a number of children name their child Dagadu—stone, Bhikya—beggar, Kerya—litter, or Gavrya—cow-dung cake. This practice is common among all sections of Hindus and is a strategy to mislead the God of Death into thinking the child to be an insignificant or dirty object and thus to dissuade him from putting his heavy hand on it. The naming is often postponed for some months for the same reason.

There is a function called 'barai' which is performed sometime within six months of the child's birth, although properly speaking it should be performed on the twelfth day. It depends upon the family tradition whether the function is to take place at the village of the mother's parents or that of the father. The main item is the offering of a goat to the family gods and entertaining the villagers to a feast. If the offering is not made, it is believed that things will not go well with the child. Dr. Chapekar was informed that no naming takes place on the occasion.

The ceremonial cutting of the child's hair is called by the usual Marathi term 'javal'. The practice is common amongst Hindus and is based on the belief that the hair with which a child is born are impure. Although, for poverty or some other reason the ceremony might be postponed until the time of the marriage of the child, or the well-to-do might arrange it quite early, it is normally performed when the child is running its second year. Tuesday, Friday and Sunday are the favourite days of the goddess Bhavani, the god Kaloba and the god Bhairoba, respectively; and the ceremony has to be performed on the day sacred to the family god. The villagers are invited for the ceremony which is performed outside the village and in the direction of the family god, as in the case of 'panch

pavli'. Five stones are placed on a cleaned spot and worshipped in the same manner as at the time of 'panch pavli'. After the worship a goat or a cock is sacrificed and the villagers feasted. It depends upon the family tradition as to whether a goat is to be sacrificed or a cock or both. 'Malakari' families who eschew meat and abstain from animal sacrifice offer only a vegetarian feast on this occasion. When the goat is killed, villagers take charge of the cooking, and the host and his relatives arrange the ceremonial hair-cutting of the child. The maternal uncle of the child seats the child on his lap and cuts a lock from its hair with scissors to which the father of the child has earlier made an offering of an anna or two. The money is taken by the maternal uncle. The child's father's sister collects the lock in the hem of her sari, a service for which she is honoured by her brother with a gift of a pair of bangles or a bodice-cloth. She keeps the lock under a pot of cold water, so that the child might grow into a cool-headed adult. The barber who is present by special invitation cuts the child's hair in the usual way after the maternal uncle has done with the ceremonial cutting. The maternal uncle then presents some clothes, or a rupee or two, to the child. He is followed by the villagers who, one by one, give the child a copra-half, some jag-gery or an anna. Because of the grain and other expenses, people prefer the harvesting season for performing this ceremony. A poor man invites his wife's brother to his house and performs the ceremony in the house. But this might be done only in the case of girls; for the hair-cutting ceremony of a boy, one is required to go beyond the outskirts of the village.

When the child begins to toddle, five breads of steamed rice flour of the size and shape of a human foot are prepared and distributed to five neighbours.

The institution of adoption prevails, although it is not very common. The adopted boy usually changes his name so as to signify the new relationship in the place of the old one, but it seems that this is not considered obligatory. A Hile of Kavati wadi who was adopted by a Bhangare neither changed his surname nor his second or father's name. As against this we have the case of Shri Gopalrao Bhangare. He was originally a Bhangare and was adopted by another Bhangare, a relative of his.

The question of changing the surname, therefore, did not arise. But he discarded his father's name and is using his adopter's name in its place. Cases of adoption are more common in the family of the Raja of Jawhar and in those of Koli Jahagirdars. The formal ceremony of adoption is a simple one. The headmen of the neighbouring villages are invited to the ceremony and are presented with headdresses. In their presence the adopter seats the boy on his lap, puts vermilion on his brows and makes an announcement of the adoption. Betel-leaves are distributed and a feast follows. The ceremony does not need the services of a Brahmin priest.

The Mahadev Kolis distinguish between death, natural and unnatural. All deaths due to old age and those resulting from chronic diseases are natural. Unnatural deaths are grouped into three categories: those resulting from the wrath of a deity, those from the wrath of spirits and ghosts, and those from the wrath of living enemies working through sorcery. Specific epidemics are believed to be associated with the displeasure of specific deities and the remedies, on the basis of this diagnosis, are directed to the appeasement of the enraged deity. The services of the local 'bhagat' come in handy for the purpose of knowing the deity's mind. He also helps the bereaved family in which an unnatural death has occurred to protect the members from further harm at the hands of the malicious forces and even to take revenge if possible. Plague is not traced to the displeasure of any deity; the presence of plague—affected rats leads the Koli to treat it as a material phenomenon. Death by heart failure is treated as due to sorcery. Dropsy and paralytic conditions are sure signs of black magic. If a man gets fever on coming home from a journey, he is believed to have been affected by evil spirits on his way. Accidental deaths, in general, point to a similar cause. A man named Burud from Maveshi in Akola taluka died with swollen cheeks. His wife was said to have stolen the sandals of her neighbour. People believe that the man died because the neighbour 'hit him with a sandal'. The hitting was not real; incantations symbolizing hitting had the effect of actual hitting and resulted in the death of the man.

Contrary to the general Hindu practice of the disposal of

the dead, burial is the traditional method of the disposal of the body among these people. Capt. Mackintosh who wrote on this community in 1836 and later authors have recorded this to be the then prevailing practice.<sup>5</sup> To-day, however, cremation is preferred. When burial was the rule, those who 'died suddenly or after a lingering disease' were burnt. To-day such ones are buried. Cremation is more common in Jawhar taluka where fuel is abundant. In other areas both the forms of disposal prevail. The well-to-do and the aged are generally cremated because that is taken to be the more honourable form. In the rainy season burial is preferred to avoid the difficulties offered by rain and wet fuel. The site for cremation, according to Hindu custom which the Mahadev Kolis follow, has to be by the side of a river, and the ash has to be relegated to the flowing waters of the river. In the hilly areas of the Mahadev Kolis where rivers are few, bank of a stream is selected for cremation. And as most of these streams dry up soon after the rains, the ash has to be carried over a long distance to a river. To avoid this trouble, burial is many times preferred even in the dry months.

Invariably, a person committing suicide or dying of snake bite or a child below one year is buried. A pregnant woman dying is sometimes buried. If she is buried the embryo is not taken out. Round her grave or round the site of cremation, when she is cremated, they drive at the four corners either iron nails or pins of a particular wood. The idea is to prevent the spirit of the dead person from coming out as a ghost.

Every village maintains its own burial ground. In addition to this, there is usually another burial ground nearer to the village specifically reserved for infants. An infant below three months is buried in the bath-pit. The rulers of Jawhar have a special cremation ground reserved for the members of their family.

When death occurs in a house, the news spreads as the women in the house raise a loud cry. Relatives, friends and neighbours are already there, by the dying man's bed-side, to console and help the family. The dying man rests his head on

5. Capt. Mackintosh, *op. cit.*, p. 225; *Bombay Gazetteer*, XVII, p. 206.

the lap of his mother, wife, sister or some other female relative during his last moments, a practice which is rather unique. When such a relative is not available, the dying man reclines on some male relative sitting behind him. Some drops of milk or plain water are put in the dying man's mouth. Villagers gather as they get the news and messengers are sent to relatives and intimate friends of the deceased in villages nearby. The message is usually passed on from one cowherd to another in the intervening area until the cowherd nearest the destination delivers it. A party is despatched to dig a pit in the burial ground and a pair of youths are sent to the marketing town for getting cloth and other requirements. Sometimes the town is as far as twelve miles away and the youths have to walk all that distance and back. It is due to the hazards of the long journey that two youths are sent and not one. Now it has become a rule so that a single man is never sent out for the requirements even when the town is quite near and the journey safe. The youths approach the village tailor who is also a cloth-dealer and he gives them cloth befitting the status of the deceased. He asks for no payment; he expects to receive later on a cow or a bullock from the bereaved family in recognition of his service. The priest and the barber, who have to take an active part in the obsequies, too, expect to get a cow each for their services on the tenth day. This form of payment is called 'uchit' which literally means proper and signifies proper payment. The Koli is conscious that he is paying exorbitantly but has been bearing with it. To-day, however, a definite tendency to prefer cash payment to 'uchit' is seen. The other requirements are an earthen pot and some sundry articles of worship which are purchased against cash.

When the youths have gone to the town to bring cloth and other requirements, the chief mourner cooks some rice in the outer yard of the house in an old earthen pot and on fire for which only cow-dung cakes are used. It is not considered proper to use firewood or other fuel on this occasion. The rice might be cooked by any consanguine but never by an affine. This cooked rice, called 'shidori', with one pice is tied in a garment of the dead person. It is meant for the dead man who is believed to need it on his journey to the other world.

A funeral is never postponed, except when a death occurs in the latter part of the new moon day, in which case it is postponed for a few hours to avoid the ill-luck attached to this day.

The funeral procession starts after the youths have brought the cloth and other requirements from the town, a message is received from the party despatched to the burial ground that the pit has been prepared, and relatives and friends from villages nearby have arrived. After removing the ornaments, if any, from the body, it is first bathed in warm water and then dressed in the new clothes. It is usually on the threshold that the body is bathed, but if for sentimental reasons it is bathed inside the house, the feet are washed at the threshold. Wet turmeric is applied to the face and the feet and betel and a leaf of the sacred basil plant are put in the mouth. A vertical sectal mark is put on the forehead of a male. When a woman married by regular marriage rites dies before her husband, she receives special treatment. She is dressed in a green sari and green bangles are put on her wrists. Vermilion is applied to her brows and her lap is filled with rice or some other grain. A comb and a small box of wet vermillion, the insignia of wifehood, are also offered to her with the grain. In Jawhar taluka of the Thana district, a male is dressed in a dhoti, a 'kudta' and the headdress called 'pagote'. The 'kudta' is not worn in the normal fashion but with its front at the back of the body where it is buttoned. The bodice of the female is also put on the body in a similar way. The thumbs are tied together with a string of 'mol' grass or with hemp fibre and so are the great toes. The royal family of Jawhar uses silver wire for this purpose. After the body is bathed and before it is removed to the bier, every adult member of the family waves a lighted wick and a pice in front of it and then throws the pice out of the house. The money is later collected by the Mahars of the village.

The body is removed to the bier which is then carried to the burial ground by the consanguines of the deceased. The affines might help to carry the body only when consanguines are not enough. Four or six men, who have to be bare-headed, carry the body either on their arms or on a bier usually of



bomboos. The former alternative is taken to indicate deeper attachment for the deceased. The carriers must throughout be the same. They cannot be relieved by others. The husband of a pregnant woman abstains from joining such a party. The chief mourner is the eldest son of the deceased. In his absence another son or a brother's son officiates in that capacity. When a burial is intended, he leaves earlier for the village well with a companion, and filling an earthen pot with fresh water proceeds to the burial ground. He is never allowed to move alone lest he might harm his person through excessive grief. The funeral procession is led by musicians or a 'bhajan' party if the deceased is an old or influential person. Women, too, join the procession. On its way, as the procession proceeds, the body is placed on the ground for a while, at two spots. At each of these spots three small stones are placed on the ground so as to form a small triangle. The spots are called 'visavas' in the regular Marathi way. In the Konkan, one small stone, a pice and a twig of mango are placed at the 'visava' which is one, and not two, in this area. This stone is used in the later rites as 'ashma', to represent the deceased. It is believed that the spirit of the deceased can reach only as far as the 'visava' spot and cannot proceed further to his home.

The pit is called 'ghar'. In Junnar-Ambegaon area generally, and in specific families like Bambale, Dharade, Jangale, Kunde, Lohokare, Muthe, Paradhi and Sabale, the body is buried in a sitting posture. In other areas the body is placed on its back with the head towards the south. This is contrary to the general Hindu practice according to which the feet point to the south. The Mahadev Koli explanation of it is that the south is the Rakshas-mohor, the direction of Ravan, the Rakshas *par excellence*. Evidently they desire to turn their back to it. Some mango twigs are placed at the bottom of the pit. Before the body is laid in it, the cooked rice and the pice tied in the garment of the corpse are thrown away. It is covered again with some more twigs of the same tree. Before it is thus covered up, people present, including women, put some drops of water in the mouth of the deceased one after another, beginning with the chief mourner. The corpse is completely covered and for dropping water, an appropriate slit is made in the cloth.

Water is allowed to drop in the mouth of the deceased from the thumb. The chief mourner does not join in the filling of the pit. When it is filled up, he stands at its south end with the pot of water on his head, and his face towards the pit. The man who started the digging of the pit takes a small stone and with it strikes a hole in the pot. The chief mourner walks round the grave taking three and a half turns and standing at the north end, that is at the feet of the deceased, throws the pot backwards and returns home without ever looking back. He is accompanied by a companion. A new hole is sometimes struck at each turn as he walks round the grave. Others of the party burn incense at the head of the grave, wash their feet at the village well and then return home. In Poona district, all the people, including the chief mourner, go to the village well after the burial. Three small stones are placed in a triangle on a clean spot near the well and the chief mourner, wearing a grass ring, keeps his hands, palms up, on them at this time. The rest of the people pour some water on his hands, one after another and when all have finished, the people wash their hands and feet or take bath and then return to the village and proceed straight to the house of the bereaved family.

In Akola-Igatpuri area, the chief mourner who comes ahead from the burial ground stands outside the front door of his house with a pot full of fresh water in one hand and a neem twig in the other. As the people come back, each one of them plucks and eats, or simulates eating a leaf from the twig and the chief mourner pours water on it from the pot in his hand as they pluck. When all have done, people console the members of the bereaved family and then go home.

Cremation, though said to be displacing burial, is so rare in areas like Manik Ozar that Dr. Chapekar was not able to get a consistent account of it there. My record contains an account of the practice as it prevails in the Konkan. The corpse is prepared very much in the same way as it is in the case of burial, excepting that it is not covered wholly. If a person dies on a Saturday it is believed that another death will follow in the family. This can be prevented by burning a chicken along with the corpse. A live chicken is therefore placed in one of the armpits of the corpse and securely tied.

The face is kept uncovered. At the head of the procession the chief mourner walks with an earthen pot full of smouldering cow-dung cakes in his hands. He is not to look back. It is from this fire that the funeral pyre is kindled. The wood of the three fig trees, namely, 'vad', 'pimpal' and 'umbar', is tabooed for the pyre. In addition to the wood of these trees, that of the tree used for preparing the cabinet for the family idols is also tabooed. This latter wood is not used as fuel even for cooking and other purposes in the house. It is for this reason that an idol-cabinet is not prepared of teak which is the wood usually handy for fuel. The great toes and the thumbs are untied, and ornaments, if any are still left on the body, are now removed from the body before it is placed on the pyre. These are 'bindings' and have to be removed, as they are believed to thwart the freedom of the departed soul, a belief which the Mahadev Koli shares with other Hindus. The corpse is placed on the pyre on its back with its head towards the south. The water-giving ceremony is gone through as in the case of the burial except that some rice from the 'shidori' is put in the mouth of the corpse along with water. It is not thrown away as in the case of the burial. The chief mourner then places three copra-halves, one on the mouth and two on the eyes of the corpse. He then sets fire to the pyre. He walks round the fire with the pot of water on his head, as in the case of the burial. After going round thrice the mourner throws the pot behind in such a manner that the neck of the pot will certainly break. The party departs only after the cracking of the skull.

A circle is marked with wet cow-dung outside the front door. Some woman from the bereaved family stands there holding a stick vertically at the centre of the circle. She keeps on pouring water on the stick as each one from the party returning from the funeral wets the 'durva' grass which he has brought with him in the water flowing over the stick and then throws it on the roof of the house. The chief mourner, who is the last to do so, breaks the circle and flings the stick at one sweep. This procedure is followed in the Konkan irrespective of whether the form of disposal is cremation or burial.

It has been the practice in Jawhar to carry the body of a dead Raja in a palanquin. Darbar dress, that is, high cere-

monial dress, with all ornaments is put on the body. The palanquin with the body of the Raja in it is placed on the pyre and the body of the Raja is covered up with sandal wood and copra. A Brahmin priest conducts the funeral rites. The collection of ashes is entrusted to a Mahadev Koli family of Jawhar with whom it is a hereditary privilege and duty. As the king is immune from the observance of mourning, the duty is vicariously transferred to the members of this family. They have a right to the gold found in the ashes.

For the first meal after the funeral no food is cooked in the house of the deceased. The villagers, particularly relatives and friends among them, bring breads and chutney for the members of the family and the people who have come for the funeral from other villages. If the deceased has a large circle of friends and relatives in the village they continue bringing food for the family even for a day or two more. The bereaved family does not take any other food except bread with some simple complement for the first ten days.

In the evening rice flour is spread in a circle on the spot where the deceased breathed his last. A lighted lamp, a pot of cooked rice, one of milk and one of water are placed on the flour. The food is covered with an inverted bamboo basket and some weight placed at the top that it might not be disturbed by cats and rats at night. The departed spirit is believed to eat the food if the deceased was hungry at the time of death. Some Kolis from Jamsar asserted that they had sometimes seen some decrease in the quantity of food the next morning indicating the visit of, and the use of the food by, the departed spirit. The spirit is believed to leave its mark on the flour from which the family can get an idea about its next birth. Impression of human hand, foot-prints of an animal or of a fowl, or a mark left by a serpent are some such indications.

In the evening, after the funeral, a party of villagers goes to the burial ground and arranging cow-dung cakes in a ring round the grave set fire to one of them. This procedure is called 'dhuni lavane' and is intended to protect the grave from depredations of wild animals.

The next day after the funeral, villagers go to the burial ground in the morning for what is called the rite of 'savadne',

'collection (of earth round the grave)'. Those of the villagers, friends and relatives who could not attend the funeral make it a point to be present on this day to avoid being accused of indifference. The party carries with it four small breads, a cupful of milk, some cow-dung and cow's urine, a platter of pipal leaves and four loose leaves of that tree, four small hollow castor sticks and the ash of the fuel on which the 'shidori' was cooked and the four breads were baked. The cow's urine is carried in the earthen pot in which the 'shidori' was previously cooked. This pot and the other one of milk are carried by one of the party while the chief mourner carries the rest of the articles in an old broken winnowing-fan. Seven varieties of grains are used for the flour of the four breads. A handful is taken of each variety and the mixture is ground by the chief mourner. He turns the quern clockwise and anti-clockwise alternately until the whole mixture is exhausted. Only cakes of cow-dung are used as fuel for baking the breads which has to be done on the spot where the 'shidori' was earlier cooked. These breads must be baked only on one side.<sup>6</sup>

The party stops at the first 'visava' spot where the chief mourner pours some cow's urine on the three stones that were arranged in a triangle at the time of the funeral, and keeps some cow-dung over them. He places a bread on the cow-dung, and a castor stick by the stone so as to rest on the bread. He then keeps a pipal leaf in its upper end and pours milk on the bread through it. Identical procedure is followed at the next 'visava' spot.

At the grave, people sit in a circle around it and shove earth on to the grave with their hands. This procedure in which every one present joins, is called 'savadne'. When the place is cleared of earth and the grave properly arranged, bread and other things are placed at the head and the foot of the grave in the same way as at the 'visava' spots. Thorns are spread on the grave and big stones placed around it.

People now proceed to the village well and wash their hands and feet. At the well a small stone is placed on a clear spot near about and each one of the party after he has taken a wash, puts on a grass ring and pours water on it. The party re-

6. The Indian bread is baked on both the sides by turning it over,

turns to the village after all have done so and proceeds to discuss about the amount of grain the bereaved family is to cook for the 'divas' dinner coming on the thirteenth day. The amount of grain is determined with due regard to the economic condition of the family.

'Savadne' in the case of cremation takes the form of the collection of ashes. It is necessary for the chief mourner and the carriers of the corpse to be present for this rite. The collection of ashes is done on the day following the funeral. Food is offered at the 'visava' spot and at the site of cremation in the way it is done in the case of burial. Fire, if still smouldering, is extinguished before people start collecting the ashes which is done with twigs of 'jambhul' tree. Before the collection is finally stopped, people stand in a line around the site of cremation and, still collecting ashes with their 'jambhul' twigs, circumambulate five times round the site. They walk backwards and keep their faces turned away from the site as they walk around it. A 'ghar,' 'house', is now prepared for the departed soul which is done by placing stones in a ring all round the site. Bones are taken out of the ashes and the ashes thrown in flowing water. The bones are later carried to some holy place and relegated to the flowing waters of the river there. Those who cannot think of carrying the bones to any sacred place throw them along with the ashes.

Outside the house of the deceased, when the party returns home after collecting the ashes, the carriers of the corpse stand in pairs back to back. Every one of them takes in each hand a piece of copra, to which ghee and cow-dung are previously applied, and throws the two pieces backwards over the shoulders of his partner. The procedure is repeated three times before the party disperses.

On the tenth day of the death the rite of 'dasapind' is performed on the bank of a river, a lake, a pond or a running stream. The rite is to be performed by the chief mourner, that is, the person who puts some water in the mouth of the corpse before the actual burial or the cremation and is significantly called 'pani denara', water-giver. This mourner is required to be the eldest son and somebody else can act only in his absence. The Poona district Mahadev Kolis employ a Raval priest

for this rite. In other areas a Brahmin priest officiates. Recently, however, Koli priests have begun occasionally to figure. Everywhere either as a co-officiant, or merely as a special servant, a barber is almost as important as the priest.

Among Poona district Mahadev Kolis the chief mourner after taking a bath is shaved by the barber, the moustache being removed only if he is the son of the deceased. Cow's urine is then applied by the chief mourner all over his body. Then he bathes again and then offers water to the deceased according to the instructions of the Raval who chants some incantations at the time. Other people attending the rite also have a shave, take a bath and offer water to the deceased. The Raval prepares five small balls of cooked rice and assigns them to the river. This brings the 'dasapind' rite conducted by a Raval to a close.

In other areas where a Brahmin priest officiates the procedure regarding shaving and bathing is the same. The Brahmin prepares five breads of rice flour along with five balls of cooked rice. These are to be prepared at the spot either by the Brahmin priest or by the chief mourner. These balls are worshipped first by the chief mourner and then by others. When all have done, the balls are placed on the breads and are kept at some distance for the crows to come and eat. People wait until a crow is seen pecking rice from the balls. If the crow does not touch the rice it is taken to indicate that the deceased entertains some unfulfilled wish. If, in spite of requests, entreaties and assurances addressed to the departed spirit by the people present in general and by the chief mourner in particular, crows refuse to touch the rice for a very long time, all the food is fed to a cow and people return home. The party brings a potful of fresh water with it when it returns and it is given as 'tirtha', 'sacred water', to the diners on the 'divas' day.

The eleventh and the twelfth days are spent by the members of the bereaved family in preparing and organising for the main obsequies on the thirteenth day called 'divas', the day *par excellence*. Friends and relatives help them.

Women of the house get up early in the morning on this day and, after bathing, prepare food for the offering. It consists of 'puris' stuffed with 'puran', 'puranpolis', 'ghavans' of rice and

bread of wheat and of 'nagali'. Five articles of each variety are prepared. In addition to these, some rice is also cooked. Although this is the normal offering, poor people manage with a simpler one. The chief mourner observes a fast on this day. Some affine, too, is invited to fast in the name of the deceased. The sex and the marital status of this affine has to be identical with those of the deceased. Affines are also invited to fast in the name of those from the family who died in the preceding year. The chief mourner and the affines break their fast only after the offering has been made to the deceased. During the period of their fast, they might take tea, milk or fruit, but they do not do so as generally they have their meal, with which they break their fast, not very late. Although, as a rule, vegetarian food is cooked on this day, it is a practice in some areas of the Konkan to feed the affines who are fasting with the same vegetarian and non-vegetarian delicacies which the deceased relished.

When the food is ready, the members of the family, along with friends and relatives, go to the burial ground with the food and sundry articles of worship. The house has to be closed as every one goes to the burial ground. A stone is placed at the head of the grave to represent the deceased and worship offered and offering made to it. The chief mourner is the first to worship and others follow him. In the Konkan, people, many times, do not go with the offering to the burial or cremation ground, but offer it near the house after walking a few steps in that direction. When the offering has been made and the party is back home, the chief mourner, the fasting affines and other relatives and friends are fed usually with a simple meal. After the meal, if the deceased be a man and his wife living, she waves a lighted wick in front of the affine fasting for her husband. In all other cases, some woman from the family does the work. A well-to-do man might present a head-dress to the fasting affine on this occasion. Then the chief mourner hands over grain and other provisions for the evening meal to representatives of the villagers as it is considered to be the duty of the villagers to cook food and to look to other arrangements regarding the main evening meal of the 'divas' day. In this work even villages in the neighbourhood co-ope-



rate and they are assigned specific duties like the contribution of platters.

Mahadev Koli men from far and near attend the 'divas' dinner and the 'dukhavata' function following it, without any invitation. The well-to-do put up a special 'mandap' in front of the house for the panchayat meeting and the 'dukhavata' function. The main attraction is the panchayat of the caste which invariably precedes the dinner. The size of the gathering depends upon the economic condition of the bereaved family and the status of the deceased. About four thousand people are reported to have attended the 'divas' function when the host was Shri Gopalrao Bhangare, the M.L.A. from Bhanbardara. The main dish served was 'shira' of samolina. People come in groups from the morning and a well-to-do host engages musicians to receive them at the entrance to the village and to lead them to the house of the host, where they are given warm water to wash their feet and faces and then served tea. People then disperse until late in the afternoon when they are summoned for the panchayat. Unless a special 'mandap' is put up, people assemble in the village temple. When they have assembled, leaders decide to start the proceedings and order a caste-constable to check the villages represented there. Sabales and Ghotes are the families whose male adults are caste-constables. One of them now stands up and calls out the names of the villages in the neighbourhood one after another. People present answer him as the name of their village is called out. If there be any work left unfinished at the last meeting of the panchayat, it is taken up before new complaints are entertained.

Capt. Mackintosh<sup>7</sup> has given a list of the caste-functionaries with their specific duties who work at the panchayat, but to-day, excepting the constables, others continue only in name. Before the merger of Jawhar State, the 'sarpanch' or the chairman of the panchayat, as far as the area covered by that State was concerned, drew his authority from the Raja. To-day influential people become leaders without any formal election, nomination or any hereditary authority.

7. Op. cit., p. 229.

When the business of the panchayat is over the host asks the permission of the assembly to allow the people to move for the dinner. It is always a vegetarian meal, the menu depending on the status of the host. Rice, 'dal' and perhaps some vegetable are the usual menu; 'bundiche ladu', sweet balls of gram puffs, or samolina cooked in water and jaggery and called by the Mahadev Kolis 'lapashi' is added when the host is well-to-do. It is the barber who sprinkles water on the platters before food is served and he also serves water to the diners. It is his duty to do these two jobs. For the 'divas' dinner at Bhangare's, already referred to, the village barber had brought with him half-a-dozen helpmates from among his relatives to serve water to the people, as the attendance was expected to be, and was, exceptionally large.

For the 'dukhavata' function, people gather after the dinner, in the place where the panchayat had met. The consanguines of the deceased and those who are 'gotribhaus' to the family sit in a row at the centre bare-headed. A lighted lamp burns near them and five pairs of betel leaves with broken areca-nut are placed somewhere in front of them. In the Konkan, these pairs of betel leaves are meant one for God, one for the 'Sarpanch' or the chairman, one for the village Patil and the remaining two for the relatives-in-law in general. The Mahadev Kolis of Akola taluka, for the purpose of the 'divas' function divide their eighty-two villages in three groups: the Mula division, the Pravara division and the Pathar. Two pairs of betel-leaves are reserved by them for the two divisions other than the one to which the mourner's village belongs. The other three pairs are meant, one for Maruti of the village, one for the village Shirpunje and one for that of Shirasgaon Dhupe. In Junnar-Ambegaon area all the five pairs of betel leaves are offered to the village Maruti.

The main item in the 'dukhavata' function is the presentation of new headdresses to the chief mourner and his 'gotri' brothers. It is only the affines who make the presentations, consanguines being taken to be in mourning. The headdress traditionally and conventionally presented is what is called the 'pagote'. It is a piece of cloth longish and of short width for

wrapping round the head. It is considered improper to present a coloured 'pagote' on this occasion; only white ones should be used. In spite of this rule of propriety, red 'pagotes' were seen presented at a 'divas' function at Gonde in Thana district, where the well-to-do Patil of the place was the chief mourner. The explanation offered was that enough white 'pagotes' were not available in the market-town of Mokhada. Intimate friends and near affines present a headdress. Others pay cash in lieu of it. The amount varies from two annas to a rupee, a two-anna coin being the most common. The presentation of a headdress is called 'ola (wet) dukhavata' while payment in cash is 'suka (dry) dukhavata'. In the Konkan it is the caste-constable who stands up and summons people to come forward to offer their 'dukhavata.' As people come one by one, he accepts the headdress or money from the affine, announces his name and his 'dukhavata' to the assembly and then puts it in a plate specially kept there for the purpose. In the Igatpuri-Akola region it is the village barber, and not the caste-constable as in the Konkan, who accepts and announces the presentations. Whether the caste-constable or the barber, he has to ask leave of the assembly and the leaders to begin the work. The barber in Igatpuri-Akola area first summons the people from Junnar and Sinnar, then those from the families of Khades and Bhangares, and then non-Mahadev Kolis if any. It is only after he has finished with these that he calls on the generality of affines to make their presents. The names of Khades or Bhangares are not announced when they happen to be the 'got-ribhaus' of the family in mourning. Mahadev Koli informants reported that Junnar is honoured with a preferential treatment because it happens to be their original home from which long back they migrated northwards to their present places. Khade and Bhangare are Jahagirdar families from the area and are therefore honoured. None of the informants, however, could say why Sinnar was honoured and why Bambale, the family of the famous Subhedar of Rajur who once governed the whole area, is not mentioned with Khades and Bhangares.

The announcer checks up if all have done and then proceeds to distribute the headdresses to the chief mourner and

the 'gotribhaus' sitting in a line there. He has to take the permission of the leaders and the assembly to start the distribution which then he does according to the instructions of the leaders. Every one in the line of mourners gets a headdress if enough of them are received; otherwise only the important and senior ones are honoured with it. The mourners, with the leave of the assembly, wear it taking anti-clockwise turn instead of the usual clockwise ones while wrapping it and do so without a stop. Then they greet the assembly with folded hands saying Ram-ram, the expression of greeting. Those of the mourners who are not given any headdress wear their old ones which so long they have kept with them but not worn. The chief mourner puts some money, usually four to eight annas, on the old headdress of such affines who have not received a new headdress in lieu of it. The announcer now counts the amount collected in the plate, makes it known to the assembly and then hands it over to the chief mourner. The latter then proceeds to the village temple of Maruti and lights a lamp there. Betel leaves and areca nut are distributed to all present and the function comes to an end. Well-to-do hosts invite 'tamasha' troupes for the entertainment of the guests which might continue till the small hours of the morning. At the 'divas' function of the Bhandardara M.L.A.'s mother two 'tamasha' troupes entertained guests throughout the night. It was reported that at Gonde a Marathi drama was presented by youths of the village on one such occasion. In Junnar-Ambe-gaon area the 'dukhavata' function is sometimes rushed through on the tenth day by poor families as a measure of economy. The community dinner is still given on the thirteenth day but does not attract a large gathering.

With the wearing of the new white 'pagote' by the chief mourner and his consanguines, their period of mourning with its attendant impurities comes to an end. During this period no affine eats or drinks at the house of the family in mourning. The women in the family bring water from the village well but other women keep apart and avoid touching them. The restrictions are rather strict for the first ten days after which the prohibition against the use of headdress is the only rule strictly followed. 'Daravar yene', 'to come to the door,' is the expression

among the people to denote a condolence visit. The period of mourning is less for unmarried people, being seven days for an adult and three days for a child. In such cases, an offering of food is made at the grave and some unmarried boys are fed at home on the last day of mourning. The 'dasapind' and 'divas' functions are not performed. When a person dies away from the village the mourning is observed since the time of the receipt of the news of death, and 'dasapind' and 'divas' functions are performed at the proper time. In the case of persons who are not traced, people wait for a year or two and then proceed to perform these obsequial rites. If it is a married man who is not traced, his widow takes the lead in this matter as she cannot remarry unless and until the obsequial rites are performed.

There are some people in the Konkan who perform the 'varsha-shaddha' or the 'first anniversary'. Food which the deceased liked most is prepared and an affine is invited to dine with the family. He has to fast on the day until he breaks it with this dinner. In the family of the Raja of Jawhar monthly remembrance-rites for the first year are also observed in addition to the anniversary. A Brahmin priest officiates.

The dark half of the lunar month of Bhadrapad is taken to be the fortnight of the manes when they are invited and offered food in every family. The Mahadev Koli shares this general Hindu belief, and for the observance, selects the particular lunar day of the fortnight on which the deceased breathed his last. People of the village are invited to dinner. The host or his representative goes round the village giving some rice grains to the head of each family which signifies an invitation to dinner. He stands on the roof of his house and invites crows in a similar way. It is a vegetarian meal for which 'kadhi', a savoury prepared from butter-milk, has to be served. Before the food is served some of it on a platter is placed on the roof for crows. The host calls out to crows to come and eat it. People do not take food till a crow has eaten. If no crow comes, it is taken to indicate the unwillingness of the ancestor to come and eat with the family. All this is common Hindu practice.

The Mahadev Koli believes that there is no salvation for one without a son, for an unmarried person and for a suicide. These and pregnant women and women in child-bed become ghosts after death. Every one has to take rebirth sometimes or other after death and the life in the next birth depends upon the merit or sin that one has acquired during the present existence.

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY—I

THE Mahadev Kolis consider the permanent provision of a mate to be an indispensable primary need. It is hard to find bachelors and spinsters in the community. But this is a feature of social life which they have in common with many other backward communities. There are people among them who assert without qualification that a Mahadev Koli boy or girl must have a mate. Without a mate life would be unbearable. One may go without food but not without a mate. This attitude strengthened by the general belief that there is no salvation for one who has no male issue makes marriage indispensable.

According to Mackintosh,<sup>1</sup> the Mahadev Kolis had twenty-four exogamous septs. He gives a list of the names of these septs and the number of families affiliated to each of them. The names of the families are not given. His information, however, stands utterly unsupported. Today nobody knows any sept-names and when specifically asked even Patils, 'bhagats' and other persons of a half-dozen different places in five different districts in which Mahadev Kolis exist in concentration showed nothing but surprise. That all sept-names should have disappeared in a century and a half would be an interesting case of the disappearance of a culture-trait, at least the naming part of it, when actually the spirit and content of it namely, the exogamous restrictions have hardly shown any diminution in the strength of the sentiment.

It is known that even today exogamous restrictions are not based on the family name. Thus a Bhangare cannot necessarily marry any non-Bhangare. There is evidently a certain grouping of family names, and the group of families whose members cannot inter-marry is known as 'gotribhaus', gotra-brothers. Each group of these 'gotribhaus', according to the

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1. Capt. Mackintosh, *op. cit.*, P. 203.

current tradition, consists of twelve families. That is why an exogamous group of connected families is even today called 'bara-bude', twelve bases. This, however, does not conform to fact; for in Mackintosh's list, the maximum number of families comprising such a group is 17, the minimum being 2 and the average 11.8. The current names and their groupings are as follows:—

## Statement IV

## 'Gotri-bhau' Families or Groupings according to Names

Adhal	—Navali.
Adhare	—Navali.
Asavale	—Bhangare, Kondar, Viranak.
Bambale	—Bharmal, Bhojane, Gengje, Langhi, Tambekar, Umbare.
Bande	—Kirave, Popere, Shelke.
Bangar	—Gavari, Thokal.
Barabhande	—Gengaje.
Baramate	—Bote, Dharade.
Bendkoli	—Sabale.
Bhagavat	—Bhagit.
Bhagit	—Bhagavat, Bhandkule, Chaudhari, Hile, Lamate, Mechkar, Mhashal, Pichad, Titakare.
Bhalchim	—Navali.
Bhalinge	—Navali, Korade, Mundhe, Sangade, Supe, Valkoli, Unde.
Bhandkule	—Bhagit, Bhangare, Hile, Pichad.
Bhangale	—Bhangare.
Bhangare	—Asavale, Bhandkule, Bhangale, Bhange, Bhavari, Bhurkunde, Dangat, Jhade, Jhapade, Kambale, Keng, Pote, Shingade, Sonavane.
Bhange	—Bhangare.
Bharmal	—Bambale, Gavari, Gengaje.
Bhaurale	—Dharade.
Bhavari	—Bhangare, Navali, Viranak.
Bhoir	—Bote, Dharade, Sakbhor.
Bhojane	—Bambale, Gengaje.
Bhote	—Kondar.
Bhurkunde	—Bhangare, Sabale.
Bobade	—Bote, Dharade, Sukate.
Borhade	—Kondar, Rongate.



<i>Bote</i>	—Baramate, Bhoir, Bobade, Dhavad, Dharade, Kokate, Lahure, Lote, Padmere, Pote.
<i>Burud</i>	—Dharade.
<i>Chaudhari</i>	—Bhagit, Hile, Pichad.
<i>Dagale</i>	—Dhongade.
<i>Dahale</i>	—Damase.
<i>Damase</i>	—Dahale, Gabhale.
<i>Dangat</i>	—Bhangare.
<i>Darane</i>	—Dharade.
<i>Date</i>	—Jagale, Rongate.
<i>Davane</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Dhadavad</i>	—Botè, Dharade, Gondake, Shinde.
<i>Dharade</i>	—Baramate, Bhaurale, Bhoir, Bobade, Bote, Burud, Darane, Dhavad, Kokate, Lahure.
<i>Dhindhale</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Dhongade</i>	—Dagale.
<i>Dute</i>	—Navali.
<i>Gabhale</i>	—Damase.
<i>Gambhire</i>	—Jangale.
<i>Gavari</i>	—Bangar, Bharmal.
<i>Gaykar</i>	—Navali.
<i>Gengaje</i>	—Bambale, Barabhande, Bharmal, Bhojane, Kambale, Khamkar, Langhi, Ragatvan, Tambekar, Umbare.
<i>Ghane</i>	—Navali.
<i>Ghare</i>	—Navali.
<i>Ghotkar</i>	—Rongate.
<i>Godase</i>	—Gode, Kavale.
<i>Gode</i>	—Godase, Khade, Sabale, Viranak.
<i>Gondake</i>	—Dhadavad, Kathe, Khatale, Marabhal, Mukane, Shinde.
<i>Hadake</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Hagavane</i>	—Lamate.
<i>Hile</i>	—Bhagit, Bhandkule, Chaudhari, Mhashal, Pichad
<i>Jadhav</i>	—Jagale, Mukane, Patil.
<i>Jagale</i>	—Date, Jadhav.
<i>Jangale</i>	—Gambhire, Kavate, Keng, Kengale, Khade, Konkane, Mali, Muthe, Ragatvan, Shengal, Uje.
<i>Jhade</i>	—Bhangare.
<i>Jhapade</i>	—Bhangare.
<i>Joshi</i>	—Rongate.
<i>Kachere</i>	—Kondar, Rongate.

<i>Kadali</i>	—Navali.
<i>Kadam</i>	—Kondar.
<i>Kadu</i>	—Mukane.
<i>Kambale</i>	—Bhangare, Gengaje.
<i>Karavande</i>	—Kondar.
<i>Kathe</i>	—Gondake.
<i>Kavadari</i>	—Talapade.
<i>Kavale</i>	—Godase, Sabale.
<i>Kavate</i>	—Jangale, Kondar, Muthe.
<i>Kedari</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Keng</i>	—Bhangare, Jangale, Muthe.
<i>Kengale</i>	—Jangale.
<i>Khade</i>	—Gode, Jangale, Khokale, Mali, Muthe, Shene, Shilakande, Tala- pade.
<i>Khamkar</i>	—Gengaje.
<i>Khatale</i>	—Gondake.
<i>Khokale</i>	—Khade.
<i>Kirave</i>	—Bande.
<i>Kivale</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Kokate</i>	—Bote, Dharade.
<i>Kondar</i>	—Asavale, Bhote, Borhade, Ka- charè, Kadam, Karavande, Ka- vate, Pore, Rongate, Shilkande.
<i>Konkane</i>	—Jangale, Muthe.
<i>Korade</i>	—Bhalinge.
<i>Kudave</i>	—Mukane.
<i>Lahure</i>	—Bote, Dharade.
<i>Lamate</i>	—Bhagit, Hagavane.
<i>Langhi</i>	—Bambale, Gengaje.
<i>Lembhe</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Lote</i>	—Bote.
<i>Madake</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Mali</i>	—Jangale, Khade, Muthe.
<i>Malunje</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Marabhal</i>	—Gondake.
<i>Maradi</i>	—Rongate.
<i>Mavale</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Mechkar</i>	—Bhagit.
<i>Memane</i>	—Rongate.
<i>Memani</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Mhashal</i>	—Bhagit, Hile, Pichad.
<i>Modak</i>	—Vaje.
<i>Mukane</i>	—Gondake, Jadhav, Kadu, Kudave, Wagh, Waghmare.
<i>Mundhe</i>	—Bhalinge.

<i>Muthe</i>	—Jangale, Kavate, Keng, Khade, Konkane, Mali, Shengal.
<i>Navali</i>	—Adhal, Adhare, Bhalchim, Bhalinge, Bhavari, Dute, Gaykar, Ghane, Ghare, Kadali, Shene.
<i>Padmere</i>	—Bote.
<i>Pandhare</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Patekar</i>	—Phadole.
<i>Patil</i>	—Jadhav.
<i>Phadole</i>	—Patekar.
<i>Pichad</i>	—Bhagit, Bhandkule, Chaudhari, Hile, Mhashal, Samere, Shende, Titakare.
<i>Popere</i>	—Bande.
<i>Pore</i>	—Kondar, Rongate.
<i>Pote</i>	—Bhangare, Bote.
<i>Ragatvan</i>	—Gengaje, Jangale, R o n g a t e, Shende.
<i>Rongate</i>	—Borhade, Date, Ghotkar, Joshi, Kachare, Kondar, Maradi, Memane, Pore, Ragatvan, Shilkande.
<i>Sabale</i>	—Bendkoli, Bhurkunde, Davane, Dhindhale, Gode, Hadake, Kavale, Kedari, Kivale, Lembhe, Madake, Malunje, Mavale, Memani, Pandhare, Sarokte, Savale, Suragade, Sorakhade, Utale, Vaje.
<i>Sagbhor</i>	—Bhoir.
<i>Samere</i>	—Pichad.
<i>Sangade</i>	—Bhalinge.
<i>Saragade</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Sarokte</i>	—Sabale .
<i>Savale</i>	—Sabale .
<i>Shelke</i>	—Bande.
<i>Shende</i>	—Pichad, Ragatvan.
<i>Shene</i>	—Khade, Navali .
<i>Shengal</i>	—Jangale, Muthe.
<i>Shilakande</i>	—Khade, Kondar, Rongate.
<i>Shinde</i>	—Dhadavad, Gondake.
<i>Shingade</i>	—Bhangare.
<i>Sonavane</i>	—Bhangare.
<i>Sorakhade</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Sukate</i>	—Bobade.
<i>Supé</i>	—Bhalinge.
<i>Tambekar</i>	—Bambale, Gengaje.
<i>Talapade</i>	—Kavadari, Khade, Khetade, Vede.

<i>Thokal</i>	—Bangar.
<i>Titakare</i>	—Bhagit, Pichad.
<i>Uje</i>	—Jangale.
<i>Unde</i>	—Bhalinge.
<i>Umbare</i>	—Bambale, Gengaje.
<i>Utale</i>	—Sabale.
<i>Vaje</i>	—Modak, Sabale.
<i>Valkoli</i>	—Bhalinge.
<i>Viranak</i>	—Asavale, Bhavari, Gode.
<i>Wagh</i>	—Mukane.
<i>Waghmare</i>	—Mukane.

## Statement V

*Data Regarding Families Related by Marriage<sup>2</sup>*

## A. Manik Ozar (223 Marriage Relationships)

<i>Bambale</i> :	1 Code, 1 Hile, 1 Jhanjare, 1 Nadekar and 1 Pichad	= 5
<i>Bande</i> :	1 Kavate, 1 Kondar, 1 Vale, 1 Viranak	= 4
<i>Bhangare</i> :	1 Bambale, 2 Bande, 1 Dagale, 1 Dhavad, 1 Dhindhale, 1 Jangale, 1 Khade, 1 Kokate, 1 Kunde, 1 Lange, 1 Lohokare, 2 Muthe, 1 Popere, 1 Rongate, 2 Sabale, 1 Talapade	= 19
<i>Bharmal</i> :	1 Gabale, 1 Pedekar	= 2
<i>Bote</i> :	1 Adhar, 1 Badad, 2 Bambale, 1 Bankar, 1 Bande, 2 Bhandkule, 12 Bhangare, 1 Burud, 2 Dagale, 1 Dhanagar, 1 Dhanakute, 5 Dhindhale, 1 Dhongade, 1 Gambhire, 2 Ghode, 1 Gode, 8 Hile, 2 Jadhav, 2 Jangale, 1 Kavate, 4 Khade, 1 Kokatate, 1 Konkane, 1 Korade, 4 Kunde, 1 Lande, 4 Lange, 3 Lohokare, 1 Lohore, 1 Madhe, 1 Memane, 8 Muthe, 4 Padavale, 1 Paradhi, 1 Pedekar, 5 Pichad, 1 Rengade, 6 Rongate, 2 Sabale, 1 Salakare, 2 Supe	= 101
<i>Dharade</i> :	1 Bambale, 6 Bhangare, 1 Dhage, 1 Dhindhale, 1 Jadhav, 1 Kavate, 1 Kondar, 1 Lange, 2 Moje, 2 More, 1 Muthe, 1 Rongate, 2 Sabale, 1 Shelke, 1 Vale, 1 Vare	= 24
<i>Dhindhale</i> :	1 Baramate, 1 Ghode	= 2

2. Surnames which are not included in the statements IV and V are given in Appendix A.

<i>Gabale:</i>	1 Dighe, 1 Memane, 1 Patekar	= 3
<i>Gambhire:</i>	1 Dighe	= 1
<i>Ghotkar:</i>	1 Sarokte	= 1
<i>Jangale:</i>	1 Bande, 1 Baramate, 1 Bhalchim, 1 Burud, 1 Gavare, 1 Kokate, 1 Kon- dar, 1 Lange, 3 Lohokare, 1 Nade- kar, 2 Pichad, 1 Surakule	= 15
<i>Kunde:</i>	1 Dagale, 1 Dhindhale, 1 Kavate, 1 Kokatare, 1 Padavle	= 5
<i>Lohokare:</i>	2 Damase, 2 Padavale, 1 Popere	= 5
<i>Moje:</i>	1 Bande, 1 Dighe, 1 Gambhire, 1 Ghotkar, 1 Hile, 1 Lohore, 1 Pic- had, 1 Thavale	= 8
<i>Muthe:</i>	2 Bambale, 2 Dagale, 1 God, 2 Hile, 1 Kokatare, 1 Lohokare, 1 Tambekar	= 10
<i>Pichad:</i>	1 Korade	= 1
<i>Sabale:</i>	1 Bambale, 1 Gabale, 1 Gambhire, 1 Ghode, 1 Korade, 3 Lohokare, 1 Thigale	= 9
<i>Salakare:</i>	1 Bhogate	= 1
<i>Talapade:</i>	1 Bhandkule, 1 Bhoir, 1 Dagale, 1 Ghode, 1 Pichad, 1 Popere, 1 Va- yal	= 7

## B. Nimgari (180 Marriage Relationships)

<i>Asavale:</i>	1 Mundhe	= 1
<i>Bhalinge:</i>	1 Borhade, 1 Bule, 1 Davkhor, 1 Di- ghe, 1 Ghotkar, 1 Joshi, 1 Khaire, 1 More, 2 Mukane, 2 Rade, 1 Shila- kande, 1 Ubhe	= 15
<i>Bhangale:</i>	1 Kedare, 1 Lande, 1 Milakhe, 1 Mu- kane, 2 Rade, 1 Sangade, 1 Shila- kande, 1 Talape, 1 Vare	= 10
<i>Bhavari:</i>	1 Hile	= 1
<i>Gare:</i>	1 Borhade, 2 Kedari, 1 Lande	= 4
<i>Gavari:</i>	1 More	= 1
<i>Ghotkar:</i>	1 Bagade	= 1
<i>Konkane:</i>	1 Gabale, 1 Gare, 1 Ghode, 2 Mo- dak, 1 More, 2 Mundhe, 1 Nigale, 4 Rade	= 13
<i>Nangare:</i>	1 More, 1 Mundhe	= 2
<i>Rade:</i>	2 Bhavare, 1 Gavari, 1 Modak, 1 More, 1 nangare, 1 Ragatvan, 1 Supe	= 8
<i>Sabale:</i>	2 Asavale, 1 Bhangale, 5 Bhavari, 4 Borhade, 2 Bule, 2 Chimate, 2 Dengale, 4 Divate, 1 Gagare, 6 Gare, 3 Gavari, 1 Ghode, 2 Choirath,	

	1 Gode, 1 Joshi, 1 Karabhal, 1 Korkate, 5 Konkane, 1 Korade, 9 Lande, 2 Lohokare, 4 Modak, 3 More, 1 Mudagund, 4 Mukane, 9 Mundhe, 1 Nangare, 1 Ragatvan, 1 Rongate, 1 Sabade, 12 Sangade, 1 Shekare, 2 Shelke, 3 Shilakande, 1 Shingade, 3 Supe, 4 Ture, 3 Ubhe, 1 Umbare, 3 Unde, 1 Vare	= 115
<i>Shelke:</i>	1 Bhangare, 1 Gavari, 1 Kavathe	= 3
<i>Shilakande:</i>	1 Supe, 1 Utale	= 2
<i>Ubhe:</i>	1 Viranak	= 1
<i>Unde:</i>	2 Lande, 1 More	= 3

## C. Devargaon (124 Marriage Relationships)

<i>Gabale:</i>	1 Pimpalke	= 1
<i>Khade:</i>	1 Dambale	= 1
<i>Mondhe:</i>	1 Achari, 7 Badade, 44 Bendkoli, 1 Chahale, 1 Dambale, 2 Deshmukh, 1 Dhongade, 13 Dive, 1 Gabale, 1 Gavare, 1 Hile, 1 Kachare, 1 Kavare, 6 Khade, 5 Khode, 1 Khedulkar, 1 Kunde, 1 Malekar, 1 Nameda, 3 Nipalunge, 2 Paradhi, 1 Pehere, 9 Phasale, 7 Pimpalke, 1 Sasane, 3 Shevare, 5 Ughade, 1 Vadvhe	= 122

## D. Mulund (190 Marriage Relationships)

<i>Bande:</i>	1 Dagale, 1 Ghode, 1 Rongate, 1 Sutar, 1 Vide	= 5
<i>Baramate:</i>	1 Ghode, 1 Memane, 1 Sarokte	= 3
<i>Bendkoli:</i>	1 Divate, 1 Ghane, 1 Mandale, 1 Tatale	= 4
<i>Bhagade:</i>	1 Sagbhoir, 1 Sarokte	= 2
<i>Bhange:</i>	1 Gode, 1 Ghorpade, 1 Katade, 1 Mali, 1 Nangare, 1 Potkule	= 6
<i>Bhangare:</i>	1 Adal, 1 Bande, 1 Bharmal, 1 Borhade, 1 Bule	= 5
<i>Bote:</i>	1 Bankar, 1 Rongate	= 2
<i>Dagale:</i>	1 Bambale, 1 Ghod, 1 Kirave, 1 Popere	= 4
<i>Damase:</i>	1 Gagare, 1 Gode, 1 Jhade, 1 Kachare, 1 Shinde, 1 Vide	= 6
<i>Dhadavad:</i>	1 Dagale, 1 Dhige, 1 Ghare	= 3
<i>Dharade:</i>	1 Dhage, 1 Kavate, 1 Lange	= 3

<i>Dhige:</i>	1 Kachare	= 1
<i>Dhindhale:</i>	1 Baramatè, 1 Gavare, 1 Gijare,	
	2 Hile, 1 Jade, 1 Kondar, 1 Munde,	
	1 Nadekar, 1 Pedekar, 1 Thigale,	
	1 Umbare	= 12
<i>Gambhire:</i>	1 Lohokare	= 1
<i>Gode:</i>	2 Dhongade, 1 Korade, 1 Nadekar,	
	1 Talapade	= 5
<i>Hile:</i>	1 Asavale, 1 Bambale, 1 Bhoir,	
	1 Dabhade, 1 Kate	= 5
<i>Indore:</i>	1 Asavale	= 1
<i>Joshi:</i>	1 Bhalinge, 1 Davkar, 1 Divate, 1	
	Guhire, 1 Nadekar, 1 Navali, 1 Ti-	
	takare	= 7
<i>Kadam:</i>	1 Jadhav	= 1
<i>Khade:</i>	1 Lahure, 1 Sarokte	= 2
<i>Khetade:</i>	1 Mandavale, 1 More, 1 Padmere,	
	2 Pore	= 5
<i>Kokatare:</i>	1 Kavate	= 1
<i>Korade:</i>	1 Ghode, 1 Madage	= 2
<i>Kutal:</i>	1 Talapade	= 1
<i>Kund:</i>	1 Daunde	= 1
<i>Lande:</i>	1 Shilkande, 1 Wagh	= 2
<i>Mali:</i>	2 Sangade	= 2
<i>Mandale:</i>	1 Dahale, 1 Khandit	= 2
<i>Mandavale:</i>	1 Khètale, 1 Supe	= 2
<i>Memane:</i>	1 Bhoir, 1 Rengade	= 2
<i>Modak:</i>	1 Lamate, 1 Nigale	= 2
<i>More:</i>	1 Ghode, 1 Kunde	= 2
<i>Muthe:</i>	1 Kachare, 2 Nadekar, 1 Sarokte	= 4
<i>Nadekar:</i>	1 Bharmal, 1 Kachare	= 2
<i>Nigale:</i>	1 Madake, 1 Talapade	= 2
<i>Padekar:</i>	1 Dighe	= 1
<i>Patekar:</i>	1 Kachare, 1 Tatale	= 2
<i>Pichad:</i>	1 Bharmal, 1 Chaure, 1 Gagare,	
	1 Gambhire, 1 Golwad, 1 Jhapade,	
	2 Kachare, 1 Kondar, 1 Patekar, 2 Po-	
	pere, 1 Sukate, 1 Talpade, 1 Ugale	= 15
<i>Popere:</i>	2 Ddhal, 1 Khokale, 1 Nadekar	= 4
<i>Purane:</i>	1 Ghotkar, 1 Sarokte	= 2
<i>Sabale:</i>	1 Bande, 1 Baramate, 1 Bhagade,	
	8 Bhangare, 1 Bharmal, 1 Bote, 1	
	Dhadavad, 1 Dhande, 1 Dhanagar,	
	1 Gabale, 1 Ghare, 1 Ghode, 1 Jade,	
	1 Joshi, 1 Khade, 1 Kunde, 1 Madhe,	
	1 Mandavale, 1 Mudhe, 2 Nadekar,	
	1 Nigale, 1 Pedekar, 1 Salkar, 1 Ta-	
	lapade, 1 Titakare, 1 Viranak	= 34

<i>Sukade :</i>	1 Jhade	= 1
<i>Ugale :</i>	1 Bhavari, 1 Viranak	= 2
<i>Umbare :</i>	1 Kondar, 1 Pedekar, 1 Viranak	= 3
<i>Unde :</i>	1 Khade	= 1
<i>Valkoli :</i>	1 Sagbhor	= 1
<i>Vayal :</i>	1 Baramate, 1 Govari, 1 Khade, 1 Korade, 1 Mali, 1 Nadekar, 1 Ta- tale	= 7
<i>Vede :</i>	1 Bhagade, 1 Jhade, 1 Kate, 1 Pot- kule, 1 Sukate	= 5
<i>Vide :</i>	1 Bhojane, 1 Pedekar	= 2

It is seen that in my record there is no marriage between members having the same family name. Mackintosh's account, too, leads one to expect no such marriage. The authors of the *District Gazetteer of Ahmednagar*,<sup>3</sup> writing in 1884, however, state that marriages between members of identical family names were possible. They state in effect that the exogamy of the Mahadev Kolis was based on 'devaks' rather than on the family names. 'Devaks' are certain totemistic objects, some special observances about which are prevalent among a number of Marathi-speaking castes and which govern their exogamous practice. Members having identical totemic objects or the same number cannot marry one another. If two persons with the same family name happen to have different 'devaks' or totemic objects they can marry.

A further restriction that one must not marry one's mother's sister's daughter commonly completes the exogamic code. At one place, Devargaon in Nasik district, further information was vouchsafed that one must not marry one's mother's brother's daughter. The information however stands unsubstantiated from other centres. At other centres authentic information about marital custom is unequivocal in not only proclaiming that such marriages are allowed but also in asserting that they are liked. Further, the custom, while favouring marriage with one's mother's brother's daughter, looks upon with disfavour marriages with father's sister's daughter. Such marriages may take place and have taken place but, as amongst some high castes of Maharashtra, are looked upon as derogatory. In my

3. P. 203. It is not clear whether this account refers specifically to the Mahadev Kolis, because Panbhare or Malhar and Dhor, all three of them, are treated together.



data, among the 99 marriages at Manik Ozar for which details about relationships are available, 3 are with mother's brother's daughter. Among the 71 marriages from Mulund and Bombay city, there are 10 in which the wife is her husband's mother's brother's daughter. The data of Devargaon marriages is consistent with the information stated above. Of the 89 marriages for which complete data is recorded, in not even one the couple stands in this relationship.

Whatever the exogamous restrictions, complete knowledge thereof is not a necessity. In practice, marriages are usually arranged with families in the neighbourhood, 'within the panchakroshi' as the traditional saying goes. 'Panchakroshi' is a distance of ten miles and the saying recommends marriages between parties living not more than ten miles apart. In practice, however, the periphery extends to a day's walking distance, that is about sixteen miles. When a marriage is arranged outside the conventional periphery, the contracting parties are particular to look out for a precedent to make sure that they are not violating the taboo. Discussion on this point takes place at the first formal meeting.

Of the twenty-five recorded cases of Jamsar near Jawhar in Thana district, in seven cases was the periphery crossed. In all these cases the people concerned were educated and well-to-do and had previous marriage connections in the Igatpuri taluka in Nasik district, and the Akola taluka in Ahmednagar district. Of the seven cases, six are from families closely related to the Raja of Jawhar and one is of a leading gentleman from the place who has received college education.

In 4.4 per cent of the 253 marriages of Manik Ozar did both the parties belong to that village. Similar figures for the other three centres are 21.9 per cent out of 146 marriages of Nimgiri, 9.0 per cent out of 121 of Devargaon and almost 5.0 per cent of the 90 of Mulund.

The initiative is taken by the father of the bridegroom. He makes informal enquiries about a suitable bride for his son and then starts formal negotiations. Usually his family has seen and known the girl as she comes from the neighbourhood or from a known family. The parents of the bride, too, have

usually known the bridegroom. The father of the bride takes some time to consult his relatives and friends and to think over the proposal before he gives his final word.

There is, however, a change afoot. In the case of educated girls who have completed their primary course or have received high school education, it is their fathers who have to search for a suitable bridegroom.

The priest-cum-astrologer is consulted to ascertain whether the stars are favourable for the union to be successful. If the astrologer finds no objection and the bride's father generally approves of the bridegroom, discussion starts about the bride-price. The common Marathi term 'dej' is used to denote the bride-price. Before the Second World War the conventional amount of bride-price was Rs. 30-32. Before 1940 it was said to be Rs. 21. In the *Bombay Gazetteer*, it is stated that the bride-price then prevailing in Ahmednagar district<sup>4</sup> varied from Rs. 15 to Rs. 30 in cash and three cwts, of grain. In Nasik district,<sup>5</sup> it varied from Rs. 10 to Rs. 50 and 1 to 2 maunds of grain. S. S. Ul Hassan, writing in 1920, about this community in the Hyderabad State<sup>6</sup> speaks of the same amount of cash, as in Ahmednagar, but makes no reference to grain. From these figures, it is clear that the bride-price remained at the same level over a very long period until the Second World War. During and after the War it rose to between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300 till, in the year 1952, leaders in the community fixed it at Rs. 101 to avoid hardship on account of the excessive bride-price. The hardship was aggravated by the lowering down of the prices of cattle and grain which in the main are the sources of the people's cash. In the Jawhar region grain is not included in the bride-price although it is given and received unofficially. In the Akola area in Ahmednagar 2½ maunds of grain have to be given as bride-price. There have been instances, however, of well-to-do people foregoing their right to receive grain. Even though the bride-price has been formally fixed at Rs. 101, the rule is not always observed. More money is received though the transaction is tried to be kept secret.

4. P. 203.

5. p. 61.

6. *The Castes and Tribes of H. E. H. The Nizam's Dominions*, p. 336. There are no Mahadev Kolis in Hyderabad to-day.

The community residing in the north-western part of the Poona district decided some sixty years before that three and a quarter maunds of grain and Rs. 25 in cash should be the bride-price. To-day the rule is observed only in form. Much more is received by bride's father though clandestinely. Of late there have been some educated men who have foregone their claim to the bride-price and have accepted only the grain with which they have to feed the caste-people.

In addition to the cash, as a component of the bride-price, some grain and clothes have also to be given. The amount of these varies from place to place. The regulation about the quality and quantity of these is attempted to be fixed by regional councils or leaders. There is neither uniformity nor unanimity about them as in the case of the cash component. The grain is sent sometime before the main ceremony and the men carrying the grain are feasted at the bride's house, after it is delivered in the presence of the villagers. The cash is paid when the ceremonial cloth referred to later, is purchased. In days when coins were not much used in the backward regions of the Koli area, it is reported that cows and bullocks used to be given as the bride-price.

When exchange marriages known in Marathi as 'sate-lote' are arranged between two families, the question of bride-price does not arise. But such occasions must be fairly rare as I have not come across any such marriage among the two hundred and fifty and odd marriages for which I possess full details.

Capt. Mackintosh writing more than a hundred years ago, stated that the age of marriage in this community was 6 to 10.<sup>7</sup> *The Bombay Gazetteer*<sup>8</sup> gives the same age for Thana and with regard to Ahmednagar it states that while boys were married before 25, girls were married between 12 and 16. S. S. Ul Hassan<sup>9</sup> says about the Mahadev Kolis of Hyderabad State (?) that boys and girls were married as infants or as adults, and more specifically from 8 to 16.

In the interior are seen girl-wives aged 5 and they are reported to have been married when they were three or four

7. Op. cit., p. 228.

8. *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. XIII, pt. 1, p. 172; Vol. XVII, p. 108.

9. Op. cit., p. 336.

years of age. Educated unmarried boys of 20 serving in the Bombay offices and unmarried girls of 16, who had finished their primary education, were met with particularly in urban areas. And the noteworthy fact is that their parents had only recently started negotiations for their marriage.

Even when girls are married after puberty, parents find no difficulty on that account, post-puberty marriages not being looked down upon by the society. Even if the bride is in her menses during her marriage, it does not matter as nobody knows about it and nobody minds.

The *Bombay Gazetteer* has recorded that there were many men in those days who had to remain unmarried all their lives because they were too poor to raise the bride-price. This is true even to-day. But being unmarried does not mean being without a mate. There are many unmarried couples living as husband and wife.

Of the 259 marriages in my collection about which age-data is available, 71 are from the urban area of Mulund near Thana. Of the remaining 188 marriages, 179 wives had married before they were fifteen years at the time of marriage. Statement VI A and B (p. 110) presents the age-data of these marriages along with the husband's age at the time of enquiry.

It will be seen from the figures that only in 15 marriages the husbands were over 56 years of age, that is they were born before 1900. Thus only about 8 per cent of these marriages relate to male partners born before 1900. Only one of them married when he was above thirty. The remaining 14 married when they were between the ages of eight to twenty-one. Averaging the ages at marriage of these 14 husbands we have 14.4 as the average age at marriage. Their 14 wives averaged 9.4 years at the marriage.

As against these 15 marriages of males born before A.D. 1900, there are 76 marriages of males who, being at the time of enquiry below twenty-six years of age, were all born after 1930. In these 76 marriages there are 5 in which the husband at marriage was twenty-one or over, a feature which substantiates the general observation made above. In about

Statement VI  
*Age-period of Marriage*  
 A. Manik Ozar

		Age at Marriage							Total marriages
Husband's present age		Below 4 yrs.	4-7 yrs.	8-10 yrs.	11-14 yrs.	15-16 yrs.	17-20 yrs.	21-30 yrs.	
Below 26	Males	—	6	6	11	2	6	4	35
	Females	7	10	9	7	2	—	—	
27 to 41	Males	1	2	1	3	11	10	9	37
	Females	3	5	14	12	2	1	—	
42 to 56	Males	—	1	1	1	7	3	1	14
	Females	1	3	5	4	1	—	—	
Over 56	Males	—	—	—	4	5	3	—	13
	Females	—	1	7	3	2	—	—	
Total marriages									99

*Age-period of Marriage*

B. Devargaon

		Age at Marriage							Total marriages
Husband's present age		Below 4 yrs.	4-7 yrs.	8-10 yrs.	11-14 yrs.	15-16 yrs.	17-20 yrs.	21-30 yrs.	
Below 26	Males	—	—	4	15	12	9	1	41
	Females	—	7	15	18	1	—	—	
27 to 41	Males	—	—	5	10	6	11	2	34
	Females	—	7	15	12	—	—	—	
42 to 56	Males	—	2	5	3	—	2	—	12
	Females	1	6	3	2	—	—	—	
Over 56	Males	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	2
	Females	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	
Total marriages									89

20 per cent of the marriages the husband was between seventeen and twenty years. In only 6 marriages was he below eight years, a fact which ought to militate against any sanguine conclusion that the attitude of the Mahadev Kolis towards age of marriage has fundamentally changed. In nearly two-thirds of the marriages, the husband at marriage was above seven years and below seventeen years of age.

From the numerical point of view, the only comparable group of marriages in my collection is the one in which the husband's age at the time of enquiry was between twenty-seven and forty-one. These husbands must have been born between 1914 and 1928. From the point of view of birth-period of the husbands this group of marriages stands midway between the group in which the husband at the time of enquiry was over fifty-six years of age and the last category in which the husband was below twenty-six. It comprises 71 marriages and has 11 marriages in which the husband at the time of marriage was between twenty-one and thirty years of age. These late marriages thus in the middle-period group are significantly larger than those in the latest-period group. This, too, is a feature which militates against the sanguine view of a fundamental change in the attitude towards marriage-age. The lower-age group at marriage namely seventeen to twenty years, also repeats the story of the difference, though not equally large. As against the 20 per cent of such marriages in the group where the husband at the time of enquiry was below twenty-six years, there are almost 30 per cent of them in this group of marriages in which the husband was born in the earlier period. At the other end, that is the lower age at marriage namely before eight, the number of marriages is only half of those in the latest-period group. This feature, too, speaks against any fundamental change in attitude. Needless to say, the three middle groups of age at marriage comprising ages eight to below seventeen support the same conclusion.

Turning to the wives and their age at marriage one finds that the situation is better described as having worsened in the latest-period marriages. For, among these marriages, with husband's age at the time of enquiry below twenty-six years, nearly one third of the wives were married when they were below

eight years of age. In the group of marriages of the earlier period, that is, in which the husband's age at the time of enquiry was between twenty-seven and forty-one years, there were only 21 per cent with wives married at that age. In the still earlier-period marriages numbering only 26, in which the husband's age at the time of enquiry was between forty-two and fifty-six years, such marriages form more than 42 per cent of the total. If the number of marriages for this period in my collection were more or less like those in the two other periods compared, I should have remarked that the performance was wayward enough not to justify the above observation.

In the four birth-periods, from the earliest to the latest the percentages of marriages in which the wife was eight to below seventeen years of age to the total number of marriages in the group are 86, 58, 77 and 68 respectively. In the two latest birth-periods the percentages of such marriages vary only slightly. One may conclude from all this that the preponderant practice about age at marriage prefers the woman to be above seven and below seventeen.

In statement VI below, relevant data about the group of 71 marriages studied in the Mulund area are presented.

Statement VI. (*contd.*)

Age-Period of Marriage

C. Mulund

			Age at marriage							
Husband's present age			Below 4 yrs.	4-7 yrs.	8-10 yrs.	11-14 yrs.	15-16 yrs.	17-20 yrs.	21-30 yrs.	Over 30 yrs.
										Total marriages (71)
Below 26	Males		—	—	—	6	6	9	4	—
	Females		—	2	8	10	3	2	—	25
27 to 41	Males		1	1	1	3	3	14	10	—
	Females		3	4	12	13	5	2	—	39
42 to 56	Males		—	—	2	1	—	3	1	—
	Females		—	1	3	1	1	1	—	7
Over 56	Males		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Females		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

It will be seen that there is not a single marriage where the husband was above fifty-six years of age at the time of enquiry. Further, in the group of marriages where the husband was aged forty-two to fifty-six at the time of enquiry, a much smaller percentage of the total is found than in the case of the two rural centres, Manik Ozar and Devargaon so far dealt with. I shall therefore confine my comments to only the two latest birth-periods. Of the 64 marriages of these groups, in 15, that is, nearly 23.5 per cent, the husband at marriage was twenty-one or over. In the 147 marriages of these birth-periods in the rural centres of Manik Ozar and Devargaon, on the other hand, such marriages form only 11 per cent. In the rural areas, of the 147 marriages, in only one case the wife was between seventeen to twenty at the time of marriage as against 4 out of 64 of the Mulund area. Of the husbands, 36 per cent in the Mulund group and only 24.5 per cent in the rural groups were married at ages seventeen to twenty, leaving a much larger percentage of husbands married at lower ages. In the Mulund group of marriages, in only 14 per cent the wife was aged below eight years at the time of marriage, whereas in the rural areas this was the case in 26.5 per cent of them. Similar is the difference in regard to the age of husband at marriage, there being only 2 among 64 of the Mulund group as against 9 husbands out of 147 in the rural areas whose age at marriage was below eight.

It is noteworthy that for marriages at ages fifteen to sixteen years, the difference of percentages of husbands married at that age between the two samples, the urban and the rural, is very small, the percentages being 22 and 21 respectively. As regards women marrying at that age, however, the difference in the percentages, is very great. Whereas 12.5 wives of Mulund marriages had married at fifteen to sixteen years, only 3.4 per cent had done so among the rural groups.

As may be expected in regard to percentages of women marrying at ages 8 to 14 years, the difference between the Mulund group of marriages and the rural group is small. In the former 67.2 per cent of the women were married when they were eight



to fourteen years of age, as against 69.4 per cent in the latter. As regards the age at marriage of males, however, one expects that the difference should be fairly marked, males in urban areas, because of the economic and other circumstances, tending to marry later. And the samples fully bear out the expectations. Only 15.6 per cent of the husbands in the Mulund area had married between eight to fourteen years. In the rural marriage-groups, however, 37.4 per cent of the husbands had married at that age.

From this discussion, I am inclined to conclude that among the Mahadev Kolis as a whole the preponderant tendency is for the girls to be married between the ages eight to fourteen. The males tend to be married more at the ages eleven to fourteen than in the lower-age group of eight to ten, and in the urban area in the later-age period much more markedly than in the rural areas. In the 259 marriages of the two groups combined a little over only 13 per cent of the husbands had married at twenty-one or over. When formulating a sociological conclusion on the basis of this data about the trend in the attitude to age at marriage, it must be borne in mind that the two cases of males marrying at an age over thirty are of persons in very poor circumstances. In general, due weight should be given to the consideration that poor economic circumstances were the direct cause for some of the marriages being delayed to the age-group twenty-one to thirty.

After the preliminaries are over, the marriage is taken as fixed and the people proceed to organize the formal betrothal. The betrothal is called 'sakharpuda', which is the common Marathi term for it. The term 'sakharpuda' is sometimes reserved for an informal betrothal when the engagement is announced in the presence of a small gathering of relatives and friends. It might take place even a couple of years before the marriage. The formal betrothal is also called 'magni' which means 'asking (for the bride)'. Alternatively, it is called the ceremony of 'kunku lavane'. This expression for betrothal appears to be peculiar to the community. It is so called because wet vermilion is applied to the forehead of the bride at the close of the ceremony. The ceremony takes place in the evening at the house

of the bride's father. The bridegroom's father invites the people of his village to the ceremony; yet although all are invited, only the near and dear ones generally join.

The bridegroom's party carries a new sari and a new bodice for the bride to wear, and some ornaments if the bridegroom's father is well-to-do. This is a recent development. Some ten years back no new sari or bodice was given to the bride to wear on this occasion and she wore her usual dress.

When the party arrives at his house, the bride's father sends an invitation to the villagers for the ceremony which starts after they have arrived. The village Patil, the chief representative of the village, takes the leading part in asking about the terms and finalising them. The finalising of terms is an important part of the ceremony as the older expression 'khandayala jane', that is 'to go for fixing the terms', referring to the ceremony shows. At this time women from the bride's party make all sorts of excessive and unreasonable demands for ornaments for the bride and for other things. Yet it is understood that the final agreement will have to conform to the current conventions. In north-west Nasik the women of the bride's party are paid eight annas each that they may not obstruct the proceedings, the older practice being to pay a couple of annas. Gifts by the bridegroom's father to the bride, her parents and near relatives, collectively called in the common Marathi way 'karani' (doing), are discussed and final agreement regarding them is reached in the presence of the assembly so that no party may later try to back out.

Once the terms are agreed upon the assembly gives its permission to proceed with the ceremony proper; and the bride, in the new sari and bodice given her by the bridegroom's father, is conducted by some elderly woman to the outer apartment in the house where the people are sitting. When the bride and her companion are seated, a youth proceeds to break five betelnuts with a stone at one stroke. When he has done, five married women from the village wave a lighted wick in front of the bride, one after another. No woman can take active part in any religious ceremony during the course of a marriage unless she is married by the regular-marriage rites and her hus-

band is living. Such a woman is called a 'suvasini'. This is a Sanskrit term used by Hindus all over India. Unmarried girls can take part in some rites but widows and the remarried are considered inauspicious and left out of all rites. After the waving of the lighted wick, each woman places some rice, some dried dates, a copra-half, an arēca-nut and a piece of turmeric in the lap of the bride, puts some sugar in her mouth and then touches a rupee coin to her forehead before marking it with vermilion. Each woman uses a separate rupee. But there is no objection for the same coin being used by all the five women. This money, which goes to the bride's father, is deducted from the amount of the bride-price.

The father of the bridegroom now pays some money to the bride's father for a dinner to the villagers. The amount is fixed after discussion between the villagers and the bridegroom's father. The villagers are not inordinate in their demand but are reasonable; and it does not go very difficult to reach an agreement over the figure. The bride's father adds half as much to the amount contributed by the father of the bridegroom, which is usually five rupees, and with this money a dinner is organized for the guests and the villagers. It turns into a small party as all villagers do not attend. Rice and dal with ghee and sugar are usually served. Among the poor, tea, instead of a dinner is offered to the villagers and when even that becomes a burden, jaggery is distributed among those present. Before the days of prohibition, liquor was sometimes served on this occasion. The father of the bride, if well-to-do and liberal, gives some presents, mostly head-dresses, to the close relatives of the bridegroom. A Brahmin, if it is not very inconvenient for him, is present as a witness and, though he has no specific priestly functions, as an honoured guest, he receives a small cash-present.

The priest-cum-astrologer is now approached for choosing the auspicious time for the marriage. Weddings are celebrated in the evening. It is only in exceptional cases that they are celebrated in the morning. Although the auspicious time is the time of sundown, processions and ceremonies preceding marriage run late into the night with the result that the main rites are performed at as late as 10 P.M. in some cases. Once the

marriage day is fixed, the only work to be done before the marriage ceremonies proper start is the purchasing of cloth for the marriage. This cloth is collectively called 'basta', a term which is common amongst agricultural classes; and both the parties invite the people of their respective villages to join them when they go to buy the cloth. It comprises of saris and bodices for the bride and her close female relatives and dhotis or head-dresses for her near male ones. The items and their quality are already agreed upon by the parties at the time of the betrothal. In addition to these, there is a bodice for the wife of the village Mahar and pieces of cloth for the village deity of Maruti, the Brahmin priest, the barber and for the 'shevanti' flags. Cheap, rough cloth used to be accepted till recently. The present tendency is to buy fine, costly cloth. There is much higgling before the bargain is finally struck. Then sweets are distributed to the villagers present. More often than not, the sweets are what are known as 'bundiche ladu' in Marathi. But they are made in jaggery and rarely in sugar. The poor distribute only jaggery. The father of the bridegroom, the father of the bride and the merchant contribute<sup>10</sup> for the sweets. Generally the bride's father contributes half as much as the bridegroom's father. The amount of the latter's contribution depends on his economic status. The merchant contributes in proportion to the price of the cloth, which is told and fixed in lump and not by piece, so that, it is said, the merchant makes a large profit. And this should be so because the merchants pay from five to ten rupees to the 'agent' who has persuaded from the party to buy from the shop. At Chodegaon in north-western part of Poona district, Dr. Chapekar saw a Muslim working as an agent, while at Rajur a literate Mahadev Koli was shown to him as doing this job. He was told that the earnings of the latter in one season averaged a hundred rupees. Merchants at Rajur informed him that parties visiting them for buying cloth for a marriage consist of from 50 to 100 people, men, women and children. The total cost of the cloth varies from Rs. 40 to Rs. 300, and the money spent on sweets from Rs. 5 to Rs. 30.

10. It should be borne in mind that such a merchant can be an inhabitant of a nearby trading town and not one either trading in the village or its resident. This is a custom more or less common among the neighbouring agricultural classes.

Throughout the function, the villagers are invited, consulted and honoured on every ceremonial occasion. In turn the villagers shoulder the responsibility for all work, to foot the bills being the only responsibility of the fathers. An areca-nut is offered as a sign of an invitation, unbroken to strangers and relatives-in-law and broken to consanguines. The rites are normally spread over five days: erection of the booth, turmeric-anointing and worship of the family deities during the course of the first two days, the main marriage ceremonies on the third, homeward procession on the fourth and untying of 'strings' on the fifth and the last day. The rites and their sequence are almost identical with those of most of the Marathi-speaking castes.

The erection of the booth is called 'mandav-dahale', 'mandav' meaning a booth and 'dahale', the twigs used in its erection. The expression appears to be peculiar to the community. It is usually erected on the eve before the wedding or on the morning of the wedding day. If the priest disapproves of the day the erection has to be done earlier. For this occasion, too, villagers are ceremonially invited. In Rajur-Igatpuri area either the bridegroom's mother or the wife of the village barber goes to invite the villagers. Sometimes she honours her husband's brother's wife by asking her to play the host on this occasion. The bridegroom's mother or her sister-in-law receives a small present of some rice, a pice and a half of a copra at each house. Bits of areca-nut are offered signifying the invitation. The host is particular to see that the people of the village are properly invited and that they come unless they are prevented by unavoidable causes. If somebody is left out, even inadvertently, he takes offence. Many times the booth is already ready and only the symbolic ceremonies are left to be done. Of the posts of the booth, at least one has to be of the mango tree, and one of the glomerous fig tree. Some twigs of mango, 'jambhul' and glomerous fig tree are brought from the jungle by boys and then placed on the roof of the booth by the men. Roofs with cloth spread underneath are exceptional and are a recent innovation. The boys silently dance at the entrance when they come with twigs and the one who comes first is honoured by a married woman waving a lighted wick in front of him and giving him as a gift a cocoanut or the half of a copra. Five married

women fill with potable water a large new earthen pot placed in the booth for the guests. A clean piece of cloth dyed with turmeric, and with a turmeric root, an areca-nut, some rice grains, one pice and one dried date tied in it at five places is fastened at the neck of the pot. At the first filling, the 'karavali' honours them with the waving of a lighted wick and offers a cocoanut to them. A forked strut of the glomerous fig tree is brought and tied to one of the posts at this time.

In Jawhar region, it is the maternal uncle of the bridegroom who has to do this job. To this strut a yellow piece of cloth is tied as in the case of the earthen pot. Musicians play all the time. In Thana and Kolaba districts and in the Northwest of Nasik district the village Mahar strings five mango leaves and ties the strung leaves to the roof of the booth so as to hang somewhere at the entrance. This is called 'toran',<sup>11</sup> and the practice prevails in the neighbouring communities. It is unknown to the east of the Sahyadri. In the Poona district tea is served now-a-days to the people at the end of the ceremony. All present are honoured with the waving of a lighted wick and with vermilion mark on their brows. On this day an unmarried boy and two unmarried girls are asked to fast. They eat only when the main dinner is served. The boy fasts to propitiate the spirit of 'munja', and the girls to propitiate the deities 'karis'. Similar procedure is followed for the erection of the booth at the bride's house. Villagers are feasted in the evening. Usually some vegetarian food is served. A goat is killed for the dinner by some, particularly when the bride or the bridegroom is the first child of the father, but the practice is weakening. For the lunch at noon only friends of the bridegroom come to keep him company. In the Thana district, after the feast, small breads of 'nagali' called 'vane' are distributed to married women in the village. Five breads are sent to each woman and they are sent at least to five women.

Then comes the ceremony of turmeric-anointing. Wet turmeric is ceremonially applied to both the bride and the bridegroom in their respective houses, either in the morning or in the evening before the day of marriage with the only difference

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11. Cf. N. G. Chapekar, *Badlapur*, p. 38.

that at the bride's house, the rubbing of turmeric precedes the erection of the booth. The woman who applies the wet turmeric has to be a 'suvasini' from amongst the 'non-gotribhau' families of the party concerned. Of such available women, the priest selects one whose name in his astrological calculus agrees with that of the party.

The villagers are invited ceremoniously, with the full marriage music accompanying the inviting party to all the houses. The inviting party has to be accompanied by musicians who play when the party moves from house to house.

The turmeric required for this ceremony is pounded into powder by five married women ('suvasinis') on the day of anointing it. They sing songs when they pound. The songs speak of gold and silver implements, so inconsistent with the prevailing poverty. It must be mentioned here that the Mahadev Kolis do not have a special 'dhavalarin' or singer-woman as among their neighbouring tribes of Thakurs and Varlis. Young women attending the function do the singing. The mortar and the muller used for this purpose have to be of stone.

When the turmeric roots are broken into fairly small bits they are transferred to a quern where they are rubbed into fine powder. The quern too has to be tied beforehand with a yellow piece of new cloth with the same contents as those described in connection with the water-pot.

The quern must not be used for usual household purposes so long as this cloth is fastened on it. On the fifth day of marriage, the general unfastening day, the cloth of the quern, too, is removed and the quern put to daily use.

The bride is bathed before turmeric is applied to her. She sits on a low stool below which a square is marked with lines of rice grains, and over which is spread a small piece of cloth; and then turmeric is applied to her feet, her sari and her forehead by the 'suvasini' who has been already approved by the priest. In this procedure, the 'suvasini' is followed by other members present. Henceforward a girl with a pot of water with a cocoanut and a mango twig put over its mouth always stays by her side. The pot is called 'kara' and the girl the 'karavali', that is one who carries the 'kara'. She is generally the

younger sister of the bride. In parts of Akola and Igatpuri talukas the 'karavali' has to be a 'suvasini' and not an unmarried girl as in the Thana district.<sup>12</sup> The 'karavali' gets a bodice for her service. Similar procedure is followed at the house of the bridegroom, in his case the turmeric being applied to the white turban on his head and not to his body. A sister of his officiates as the 'karavali'. After the application of the turmeric an open dagger with either a fresh lemon or a wetted areca-nut fixed on its point and covered up in a piece of cloth is given to the bridegroom which he keeps till the end of the marriage ceremony. Strings of flowers are bound around the forehead of the bridegroom and the bride at their respective houses, which, too, they keep till the whole ceremony is over. Custom lays down that one of the strings must be of 'rui' flowers. Another one is usually of 'chapha' flowers. Pl. 9 shows Mahadev Koli women busy stringing 'chapha' flowers. The songs of women refer to these two kinds of flowers. Small balls of cooked rice are then distributed to the women and children of the village on this occasion.

Before the general distribution begins, the 'karavali' places five rice balls on the lap of the bridegroom, speaks aloud her husband's name and then removes them. The procedure is followed by four married women, while other women sing. Then start the general distribution. Every household in the village, besides the musicians and other functionaries get a share. This is mainly a woman's function.

On this occasion the bridegroom's maternal uncle presents to his sister a new sari and bodice because she is now enjoying 'kus ujavne' or the change in the civil condition of her son. 'Kus' literally means a flank of the body and figuratively, the son. He keeps the clothes with some friend in the village where his sister with other women of the village goes ceremonially to receive them after the rubbing of the turmeric is over. She takes a bath there, wears the new dress and ceremonially returns home. The wife of her husband's brother or some other woman from the family invites the women of the village 'to dress the mother.'

12. In the advanced' communities it is an unmarried girl who works as a 'karavali'.



At some places, as in the Poona district, the custom obtaining in the advanced classes of sending turmeric from the bridegroom to the bride prevails among the people. When the turmeric-rubbing is over at the bridegroom's house, the rest of the wet turmeric is carried by a couple of men to the bride's house. They carry with them, in addition to the turmeric, a sari and a bodice for the bride, the usual material for her lap-filling and wheat flour, jaggery and gram pulse for the 'puranpoli' dish. These men are called 'patale' because they carry the bride's sari, 'patal' meaning sari. Women inspect the material at the bride's house and if anything is found missing, the men are much ridiculed. Before they leave, they are feasted and a turban is presented to one of them.

In the evening after the erection of the booth three ceremonies are performed at both the houses. First comes the pounding of rice called, 'ghana', followed by the second ceremony of oil-sprinkling known as 'telvan', and then comes the third and the last ceremony of the evening, 'devadevak' or 'devakarya' at which the the family gods are worshipped. All these ceremonies are performed more or less in a similar way in most of the Hindu communities.

For the 'ghana', the bridegroom sits in the booth with about eight lbs of rice heaped in front of him. Five married women lightly pound, or simulate pounding the rice with a pestle to which mango leaves have been tied before. They sing a song appropriate to the occasion and the bridegroom keeps on collecting the rice in a heap, as it is 'pounded'. When the song is finished, the bridegroom measures the rice. If it measures less, he is taken to be thriftless.

Oil is next sprinkled on the head of the bridegroom by five married women who stand in a circle around him. They sing a specific song appropriate to the occasion and, while they sing, keep on sprinkling oil from a common vessel with a small stick. Each one uses a separate stick and supports the common vessel with the other hand. This is the practice of the people to the east of the Sahyadri.

To the west of the Sahyadri, that is in the Konkan, the procedure is quite different. The women there use an arrow with five mango leaves tied to it instead of a stick. At the start a

man sprinkles oil with the arrow on the family idols. Then the women take charge of it and sprinkle oil on the litter-heap, the threshold, the fireplace, the mortar and the bridegroom in succession. The bridegroom is seated on the stone mortar in the house when the oil is sprinkled on him. This is 'telvan.'

Now follows 'devadevak' otherwise called 'devadevi' or 'devakarya'. The first term is appropriate as it suggests the two-fold nature of the worship, that of the idols or 'devas' and of 'the devak'<sup>13</sup> or the family crest or the guardian deities of the family. 'Devakarya', the third term, is a Sanskrit and standard Brahmanic expression meaning a rite in honour of deities. The idols are worshipped by a 'bhagat', the priest-diviner from the caste, or by some other experienced senior man, and the family crest is worshipped by one who has to be a consanguine of the family, although the maternal uncle of the child to be married, does the work in exceptional cases. The head of the family usually honours some of his brothers by entrusting the worship to him. It is not considered improper if this man worships both, the family crest and the idols, and in many cases he does so. The family idols are specially got cleaned and polished from a goldsmith, for the occasion. Twigs of the mango, the glomerous fig-tree, the plum, the 'jambhul' and the 'rui' plants, together called 'panchapallavi', form the family crest. In the Konkani twigs of the fig tree are sometimes used in place of the mango or 'jambhul' twigs. The idols are kept at a friend's house when they are brought back from the goldsmith after being cleaned and polished. This friend's house is called 'janosa' and the idols are brought home from there with great ceremony. The worshipper and his wife take a bath and then proceed in a procession to bring the idols. The hems of their garments are tied and the women present hold a white sheet stretched over their heads as they walk. Musicians lead the procession and the women who accompany sing as the procession winds its way. The worshipper uses an areca-nut to represent his wife if he has no wife or has married a widow who is tabooed on that account. An areca-nut may represent idols if the family has none. After bringing the idols home, the procession again sets off to bring

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13. Cf. N. G. Chapekar, op. cit., p. 490.

the ritual twigs. These are already cut and kept either in a temple in the village or near the village well, or at the place where the Holi fire is worshipped. The worshipper carries in his hand a plate in which are placed a lighted wick in a stone receptacle, a piece of turmeric, a copper pice and some rice, and on his shoulders, a ploughshare and a coil of rope. Boys from the village conceal the twigs and hand them over to the worshipper only when they get a cocoanut. He worships the twigs, makes them an offering of a bread from a couple of breads which he has brought with him, and returns home with them. The bread offered is taken by the musicians who are usually Mahars. In the North-west Nasik the worshipper and his wife bring the ritual twigs from the temple where the temple servant Taral or the Naik has earlier brought them. The couple is called 'jugum'<sup>14</sup> For his work, the Taral or the Naik is given rice and other provisions by the 'couple' when they bring the ritual twigs. Before leaving the house the couple mark the door with met turmeric drawing twenty-five small vertical lines in groups of five. The twigs when brought home are tied to the pestle used earlier for pounding rice and the pestle is tied vertically to the forked principal post of the glomerous fig tree in the booth. The bread which he brings back home with the twigs, and one more from the house are tied to the pestle. He places a quarter-seer measure on the upper end of the pestle and keeps a lighted lamp on it. In the North-west Nasik a churning stick is fastened along with the pestle and other things. In the Konkan the idols are worshipped in the booth which is divided into two parts, one, for the guests and the other for the idols. In the regions east of the Sahyadri, the idols are usually worshipped in the house of the usual place of the idols. In the Konkan region a coanut, a cock or a goat is sacrificed to the family gods, according to the family tradition. The tradition, however, is not very strong in favour of animal sacrifice and usually a cocoanut serves the purpose. Presents are made by the well-to-do near relatives-in-law. These practices are not found in the eastern districts.

On this occasion a 'bhagat' gets possessed by deities and

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14. This word very faintly conceals its Sanskrit original 'yugma', a pair.

when in trance, he advises his host about the evil spirits on the way to the bride's house and the procedure of their pacification. Once he asked a host to offer a cocoanut to the river which had to be crossed to reach the bride's village. He also points out the irregularities in the ceremonies so far performed and the way to atone for them. The presence of the 'bhagat' and his trance are considered quite a necessity. If it be a 'bhatgat' who is worshipping the idols, he gets possessed and there is no difficulty. But if the worshipper be not a 'bhagat', then one either from the village or from outside has to be invited specially for the function. When the 'bhagat' comes back to normal, a cocoanut is daubed with vermilion and turmeric powder and placed in a plate. The plate is lifted up by five people one of whom is the bridegroom. They shout out 'Khandobacha yelkot' as they lift. If any of them has learnt the 'bani', or the specific prayer, of Khandoba he recites it. The cocoanut is then broken and the procedure is repeated. This is called 'tali bharane'. Pieces of cocoanut are placed on the turbans of guests. The 'bhagat' then adorns the bridegroom with a marriage coronet. Strings of flowers are worn, on the brows of the bridegroom and an armlet of a wet areca-nut and a wet piece of turmeric tied in a string is put on the wrist. This armlet is called 'kankan' in the Konkan and 'dav' in the region east of the Sahyadri. In the Konkan some rice is tied in one corner on the bridegroom's upper garment. In another corner some rice and a 'chapha' flower are tied. These knots are called 'bhaks', and are united, according to the instructions of the 'bhagat', one at the entrance to the village and the other at the entrance to the bride's house. In Poona, Ahmednagar, Nasik and other eastern districts, there is no 'bhak'. Yet there is 'lon', the tying of some salt in the hem of the bridegroom's upper garment. It is a protection against an evil eye as the meaning of the term 'lon' clearly signifies.

In the evening before the worship of the family idols, the bridegroom is bathed. In the Konkan friends from the village carry the bridegroom on their shoulders to their houses, bathe and feed him and then carry him back to his house again on their shoulders. The bridegroom is never carried direct from one house to another. Each time he is brought back to his own house and then taken by another friend to his house. Musi-

clans play and accompany the bridegroom wherever he goes. When friends have finished their turns, the bridegroom is given a bath at his house. For this, underneath the 'toran' at the entrance of the 'mandap', he is seated on a low stool and four earthen pots are placed at four corners so as to form a square with the stool at its centre. A coloured string passing round the necks of the pots, connects them. A fifth pot is placed at the middle of the two pot in the front. Women sing when the bridegroom is bathed, first by his father and then by the consanguines assembled. When the latter bathe the groom, he sits on the lap of his father. The groom when bathed, folds his hands and puts a pice, an areca-nut and some rice in the fifth pot. The consanguines who have bathed the boy are now asked to stand in a line; and five married women wave a lighted wick round their heads and the bridegroom's father gives them gifts of cloth which he places on their heads, that being an indication of gift-giving. They retire after saying Ramram to the assembly. The boy is carried and seated near the idols to witness the worship that is to follow. In the Poona, Ahmednagar and other eastern areas, the boy does not go to other houses for a bath. He takes a bath at home seated on a stool in the enclosure marked by earthen pots, but it is the women of the house who bathe him. Neither the father nor the consanguines figure here.

The party now gets ready to start for the bride's village for the main ceremonies. The time of starting is so arranged that the party should reach there at the proper time, and not too early. In the Konkan, the bridegroom is ceremonially bathed before leaving for the bride's house in the manner he was bathed the day before and after the bath, he does not go into his own house nor does he wait in the booth, but starts straight for the bride's house for his marriage. His bathing therefore, has also to be scheduled with an eye on the time for leaving. In the eastern districts there are no such limitations on the movements of the bridegroom. The barber cuts the bridegroom's hair before the bath, in case he is bathed, and before leaving for the marriage in any case. After he is bathed five married women wave a lighted wick round his head and one of them puts a small speck of black collyrium on the left cheek of the bridegroom to protect him from the evil eye.

As already said, before leaving for the bride's village, some hair of the bridegroom from the two sides at the front are formally and nominally cut. Women sing at this time and the bridegroom's sister spreads the edge of the upper part of her sari in front of her brother so as to collect the cut hair in it. She gets a gift of a hen, a goat, a tree or even a piece of land for her service. The barber spreads some rice so as to form a square and keeps two copra-halves, five areca-nuts and five turmeric pieces on it. When he has done the cutting of the hair, he places his razor on the square and the bridegroom's father puts eleven copper coins there. The barber receives the money, the grain and the other things. In addition he is paid from four annas to a rupee. The cutting of hair is called 'chuch karane', 'to do the corners' (sides)<sup>15</sup>. A special invitation has to be sent to the barber for this work.

The party carries with it provisions and other requirements in a basket which is called 'mul-pati', the 'root-basket'. A woman is in charge of this basket and she receives a bodice for her service. Two earthen pots from the bridegroom's bathing enclosure are carried in the basket. One is filled with rice and the other with wheat. There are in the basket, besides these pots, five breads, a bottle or a pot of sweet oil, and turmeric and vermilion powder and other articles of worship. In the Konkan, the pots are sent ahead with a couple of men who carry them with great care. They must see that the pots are not damaged on the way and are delivered safely. At the bride's house after the pots are delivered, water is sprinkled on their persons and they are feasted.

Invitation goes round in the village for the people to join the bridegroom's party. When people have gathered, preparations for the start of the procession are set on foot. Some balls of cooked rice are waved in front of the bridegroom and thrown away. Some are placed on the ground in the bridegroom's way which he has to crush under his feet. As he steps out, he extinguishes with his shoe a dough-lamp that is kept burning at the entrance. These are measures against evil spirits.

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15. Cf. N. G. Chapekar, *op cit.*, pp. 37, 105.

When he leaves his booth he faces in the direction which has been earlier chosen as lucky by the priest. The bridegroom goes on horseback to the bride's house. A horse is indispensable at least when he leaves his own house and when he enters that of the bride. This is considered the proper way in the Konkan. In the eastern districts the usual practice is to carry the bridegroom on shoulders. The use of horse is rare; a bullock cart is used if there be a good track. Before leaving, a dinner is served to the people who join the bridegroom's party. After offering a cocoanut to the deities in the chief temple of the village the party starts in a procession with the musicians leading and stops on the outskirts of the village where those who are unable to go with the party, for some reason or other, meet the parents of the bridegroom and give them a hearty send-off. Women generally weep on the occasion. The bridegroom makes obeisance to the God, a cocoanut is offered in the name of the village deities and the procession proceeds.

The procession takes a ceremonial appearance when it is nearing or passing through a village. Rest of the way people walk informally. The bridegroom, too walks unless the procession becomes formal. He is then carried on somebody's shoulders. 'Karavali', the girl carrying the 'kara' pot, is always with the bridegroom. She sits behind him when he goes on horseback. A cocoanut is offered to every village and to every river which the party crosses. Again if the 'bhagat' has specified any spots on the way at which cocoanuts need be offered, his instructions are followed and the offerings made. It is said that nobody takes and eats these cocoanuts after they are broken and offered. When the party meets a woman carrying water on the way, an areca-nut and a pice are put in her water-pot. She is honoured because her presence is considered lucky.

The procession stops on the outskirts of the bride's village where people from the bride's side receive the guests. Then follows 'Siva-pujan' or the worship of the village boundary when people from the two sides greet each other and exchange cocoanuts or areca-nuts. The guests then worship the 'lezim' of the 'lezim' players from the village of the bride. This is 'lezim-puja', worship of the 'lezim'. Henceforth the charge of the procession is taken over by the people from the bride's side

from among whom a youth carries the bridegroom on his shoulders led by the musicians and the 'lezim' players. This procession halts either at a temple in the village, at the site of the Holi Firé, or at some other convenient place where the guests rest.

The musicians now proceed to the house of the bride. Two youths from amongst the guests called 'Vardhave'<sup>16</sup> also go to the bride's house where they are feasted. The musicians play at the bride's house, and in the Konkan at the houses of the prominent people of the village, to do them an honour. This is called 'mandav shimpane' or 'mandav (booth) vajavane (play)'. The musicians come back after they have thus 'reported' to the bride's parents. Pl. 10 presents a band of Mahar musicians from Ningiri.

As the guests rest, a woman from the bride's house brings drinking water for them. In the regions east of the Sahyadri, supplying water to the guests is the village barber's job, and he keeps water ready. This is treated as his routine duty and his service is not recognized with any specific reward. The relatives of the bride from the village send food for the bridegroom who receives more than a dozen plates, each plate containing some rice and jaggery. He eats a morsel or two from each plate and the people accompanying him eat the rest of the food. The village Mahar's wife waves a lighted wick round his head and offers him a cocoanut and a waist-cord. She receives a piece of bodice-cloth in return for the honour she does to him. In the Konkan and in the north-west Nasik the bridegroom receives this honour from the Mahar's wife not at this time but later on when he starts in a procession for the marriage. Sometimes the village Mahar, instead of his wife, does the waving, and in the north-west Nasik he is followed by the Naik of the village who is a Mahadev Koli and who offers similar honours to the bridegroom and receives in return a piece of cloth or a couple of rupees.

When the musicians come back from the bride's house to the resting place of the bridegroom's party, five men from the

16. 'Vardhave' is reminiscent of the Sanskrit 'Vardhapan' and the North Indian 'Vadhava'.



bridegroom's side go in a formal procession to the bride's house carrying her dress—a sari and a bodice, the usual articles of worship and those required for her lap-filling, some ornaments, a marriage coronet for her, a couple of copra-halves and a rupee. The rupee sent with the sari is deducted from (the amount of the 'dej'. The men are feasted at the bride's house. Rice and jaggery are served and some grains of wheat, gram or something are mixed in the rice to see if the guests detect them. If they fail to do so, the girls of the house receive a cocoanut from them. The girls keep on beating the guests on the back with a twisted piece of cloth, as they eat. The guests, however, expect the attack and choose seats so as to be protected by a wall or a partition. This custom is fast weakening, and to-day, although the whole procedure is correctly followed, there is no real beating. Some years back onion used to be put in the twists of the cloth to make the apparatus harder. In the Konkan it is not men but women who carry the bride's sari and other things to her, and so there is no question of beating.

The musicians are at the service of the bride's group who now engage in their 'devadevak' ceremony. The pots sent by the bridegroom are used for the enclosure in which the bride is bathed. The musicians accompany the representatives of the bride's parents as they go round in the village to invite people for the 'devadevak' ceremony and for the marriage.

In north-west Nasik four male deities, namely Bhairav, Hirava, Khanderao and Mahadev, and the female deity Bhavani are worshipped at the 'devadevak' ceremony. The five idols are placed on a clean white sheet spread on the floor in the 'mandap' and by their side is kept a copper pot filled with water and with mango leaves inserted in the mouth and a cocoanut placed over it. Guests are invited to join in the worship, its form being that of 'tali bharane', which has been earlier described. The cocoanut kept over the copper pot is broken and distributed to the people present.

When the 'devadevak' is over, the bride's parents, their relatives, guests and the villagers go in a procession to bring the bridegroom for the marriage. The musicians lead and a

boy carries a flag called 'shevanti'<sup>17</sup> The flag is formed by tying a piece of bodice-cloth to a stick about four feet long. Another flag formed by tying a white piece of cloth to a stick is also carried with it. This procession is called 'shevanti' procession after the name of the flag carried in front of it. The bride's parents take food, water and clothes for the bridegroom. If two marriage ceremonies are scheduled for the evening in the village, then the honours are equally divided between the two by allowing one party the honour of taking out the 'shevanti' procession first and the other party the honour of performing the marriage ceremony first. This shows the importance of 'shevanti' procession which thus is treated at par with the main marriage ceremony. In such and other difficulties the decision of the villagers is invariably honoured.

When the 'shevanti' procession reaches the place where the bridegroom is resting, the Brahmin, who is there already, proceeds with 'Kalashapuja' or worship of the pot of water. It is performed by the two fathers. After the worship, the Brahmin puts some turmeric powder and vermilion on the new clothes of the bridegroom which the bride's parents have brought with them, and gives the headdress to the barber who first wears it himself and then dresses the bridegroom with it. The barber gives the old headdress of the bridegroom to the woman in charge of the root-basket only when he receives a cocoanut from her. He gives it to her because this woman is in charge of provisions and all sundry things.

The bridegroom after being dressed starts in a procession to the bride's house for the marriage. He is carried on the shoulders by somebody from the bride's party. The village Mahar obstructs him as he starts for the bride's house, and removes the obstruction only after receiving a piece of cloth which is called 'Mahar-shela', that is, cloth for the Mahar.

At the entrance to the marriage booth, two married women stand on the two sides of the entrance. They have their backs to the booth each bearing two full water-pots one over the other on her head. In the Konkan, one of the two must be an unmarried girl. Again, unlike the women from the eastern dis-

17. The term is a corrupt abbreviation of 'simantapujan', worship of the boundary.

tricts, the two women in the Konkan face towards the booth. As the bridegroom approaches the booth, the women sprinkle water with twigs of mango or 'jambhul' on his person and retire after the bridegroom has placed one pice in the upper pot of one of them and an areca-nut in that of the other. It is the privilege of the bride's father's sister to be the first person to wave a lighted wick round the head of the bridegroom. If the bridegroom has come on horseback, the horse is also honoured by her with the waving of the wick. While waving she offers a cocoanut and a waist-cord to the bridegroom. She receives a piece of bodice-cloth or more generally, a rupee from the bridegroom. The bridegroom puts the piece of cloth or the coin in the plate containing the lighted wick as she waves it round him. This rupee is counted in the stipulated amount of bride-price. When the bridegroom is brought on the shoulders of a youth, the youth is given a cocoanut which is significantly called 'the cocoanut for the horse'. In the Konkan the bride's mother, too, honours the bridegroom in the like way receives a rupee from him. In the north-west Nasik the first to honour the bridegroom in this way is the bride's paternal uncle's wife. She is followed by her mother and then only by her father's sister.

The bridegroom now dismounts and stands at the entrance and below the 'toran', where there is one, on a platter of stitched leaves. A curtain is held by the priest and the Patil or some other responsible person in front of the bridegroom. On the other side, opposite to the bridegroom, there is placed a platter for the bride. She is conducted there by her maternal uncle who stands behind her. For this service he receives an upper garment, called 'Mamashela', or at least a cocoanut. The maternal uncle of the bridegroom, too, stands behind him. The 'karavalis' each keep five betel-leaves in the mouth which they do not eat but spit out after the ceremony. As the two stand facing each other, the bride facing the east and the bridegroom the west,<sup>18</sup> with the curtain called 'jamnik'<sup>19</sup> or 'antarpat' or 'adpat' between them, they hold each other's hands. The 'shevanti' flags are held over them. In the Konkan, a sword or a stick

18. This is contray to the high-caste-Hindu practice of the bridegroom facing the east. Cf. N. G. Chapekar, op. cit., pp. 37, 204.

19. 'jamnik' to a student of Sanskrit, cannot conceal its origin from 'javanika', a term for curtain occurring in Sanskrit dramas.

is held over the pair in the place of the flag. When things are thus set, the priest, after asking leave of the Patil and other leaders, starts singing the sacred marriage verses called *Man-galashtaka*. Rice grains mixed with vermilion powder are distributed to the people, men, women and children, and they throw the grains, from time to time, on the persons of the bride and the bridegroom while the singing is going on. The 'karavalis' have to do so incessantly; other women support their pots to enable them to do so. When the priest has finished, the curtain is removed and he claps his hands and musicians play. The pair now become husband and wife.

Betel-leaves and areca-nuts are distributed among the guests, although this is not a general practice but a recent innovation in imitation of the advanced classes. Distribution of jaggery was the standard practice. Another recent practice similarly getting into vogue is for the pair to garland each other immediately after the removal of the curtain.

The pair with hands still interlocked, and followed by the 'karavalis' and their maternal uncles, walk round five times covering both their seats in each round and finally sit down so that the bride is to the left of the bridegroom. The priest winds cotton thread five times round the necks of the couple so that they stand together within the binding. This is called 'sutra-bandhan',<sup>20</sup> the binding with the thread.

'Sutra-bandhan' is followed by 'kanyadan' which literally means 'giving away of the daughter as a gift'. The maternal uncle of the bride performs this ceremony which takes place at another site in the 'mandap' which is specially prepared for the ceremony by the maternal uncle. The site is called 'bahula'<sup>21</sup> and is a square marked by sticks of castor-oil plant, vertically fixed in the ground and others horizontally fastened at the top with hemp fibre. An enthusiastic maternal uncle spends much time and money in adorning the spot. After the priest has taken the thread off the necks of the pair, the husband carrying his wife at his waist goes to the 'bahula' for the 'kanyadan' ceremony. They are seated on a blanket, close to each other, the

20. This is a term not current in the marriage rituals of high-caste Hindus. Cf. N. G. Chapekar, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

21. This term has a different connotation with high-caste Hindus.

wife on the left of her husband. The maternal uncle keeps a metal plate in front of them and the husband holding the wife's hands keeps them over it along with his. The maternal uncle pours water on the hands of the pair and then unlocks them. 'Kanyadan' is also called 'hatsodavani' in the Konkan because the maternal uncle unlocks the hands of the pair.

At this ceremony women sing. The song refers to a letter written by the maternal uncle placing an order for a pot and a plate. If the bride or the bridegroom is wearing a string of artificial pearls on the brows, it has to be removed earlier; for, the strings on the person at this time have all to be discarded and not to be used again. After the worship of Ganapati by the maternal uncle and his wife, the priest asks them to speak aloud each other's names and then unties their garments which so long have been knotted at the hem. The niece gets the pot and the plate and the maternal uncle receives the gift of an upper garment<sup>22</sup> which is given to him now if it has not been given to him already. If the bride has more maternal uncles than one, she either gets a set of pot and a plate from each of them or else they contribute and give one set collectively. It all depends upon their circumstances and enthusiasm. Presentation of cloth has to be made to every maternal uncle who offers the pots to his niece. Special invitation has to be extended to the maternal uncles to come and perform this ceremony.

The bride and the bridegroom with the hems of their garments knotted, now move to a place near the principal post of the 'mandap' for the 'navagraha-puja' or the worship of the nine planets and 'kalasha-puja', the worship of the sacred pot. The planets are represented by nine small heaps, which are made on a small square spread over with rice. Each heap is formed by an areca-nut, a pice, a turmeric piece, a dried date and an almond nut. The metal pot to be worshipped is filled with water, a pice and an areca-nut are put in the pot, and all round its mouth are placed mango or betel leaves and over them a cocoanut in an erect position with its tuft pointing up. Wet turmeric and vermilion are applied in dots to the pot at five

22. This is the same as 'Mamashela' already referred to.

places. Worship of these three, namely, Ganapati, the planets and the sacred pot, are considered important. Now follows the 'lajjahom'<sup>24</sup> or 'agni-puja', the worship of the sacred fire. Small sticks called 'samidha' of the holy banyan, the pipal, the glomerous fig, the 'rui' and 'humba'<sup>24</sup> trees are used to make the sacred fire. Rice, wheat and other grains along with clarified butter are offered by the couple to the fire as oblation.<sup>25</sup> At the end, the couple walks seven times round the fire which procedure is called 'saptapadi' or seven steps. While walking the husband holds the hand of his wife. After the circumambulations the couple is seated opposite to each other and a plate is placed between them. The priest takes eleven one-pie coins which represent the nine planets, Ganapati and Varun, the god of rain, and with the coins in his hand, he mutters some formulas and puts the coins in the plate. The husband and the wife rush to collect the coins, the wife using both her hands and the husband using only the left one. The one who collects more money wins. This game is called the game of 'sontakka' which term means gold coins. The game is played four or five times. Then one of the wife's brothers catches the husband's ear and the husband gives him the gift of a ring of silver costing about a couple of rupees. A cocoanut or even a half of a copra is given in lieu of the ring, when the budget is modest. The couple now proceeds to make obeisance to the family gods in the house. The husband when he pays his homage to the gods removes and conceals some idol from the group of them and restores it only when a cocoanut is offered to him for doing so. The 'karavali' unties the garments of the couple who, then, are offered food from one plate. They feed each other and the guests look on with amusement. When the couple has finished eating, every one of the married women present is made to repeat the name of her husband aloud; and those women who come into the house when this amusement is going on are

23. This is the standard 'lajjahom' so distorted in popular parlance. The original ceremony derives its name from the 'laja' or puffed grain that is offered in the fire.

24. *Saccopetalum tomentosum*.

25. From this it is clear that 'agnipuja' is the proper term for this rite, and the other term 'lajjahom' appears to have been borrowed, because no puffed grain is a part of the offering.

also made to do the same in what seems to be an almost endless process.<sup>26</sup>

'Phal' or lap-filling of the wife is performed on the day of marriage, unless it is too late an hour, in which case it is postponed to the next day. It all depends on the nearness or otherwise of the bridegroom's village and the time at the disposal of the Brahmin priest. The couple sits on a blanket and they worship Ganapati, the sacred pot and the 'panchayatan'—the group of five gods. All the deities are represented as usual by small heaps of rice with a copper coin, an areca-nut, a turmeric piece, an almond and a dried date on each of them. Before the worship, the bridegroom's father has to promise a dinner to the villagers for which a well-to-do man in the Konkan may even kill a goat. In the eastern districts food served on this occasion is always vegetarian. Men of modest means offer some money to the villagers in lieu of the dinner and the people being considerate it does not take much time to arrive at an agreement regarding the amount which varies from Rs. 5/- to Rs. 50/-. The agreed amount is paid cash down and is called 'korada (dry) janosa (party)' as against the dinner which is 'ola (wet) janosa (party).'

The priest now gets ready to deliver the clothes and ornaments to the bride. The stipulated gifts of clothes to the close relatives of the bride are also handed over to the Brahmin priest for making the formal delivery of them. The priest shows every piece to the people assembled, particularly to the Patil and other leaders and makes sure that it is of the stipulated quality and is acceptable to the bride's parents. If any piece is unacceptable, the decision of the Patil and other leading villagers, who have witnessed the agreement reached at the betrothal, is honoured. Conventional payments to village functionaries are then made. The Brahmin priest, the Patil, the 'lezim'-players, artisans, Mahars and the Koli Naik in the north-west Nasik, receive their customary shares from the amount made available for distribution by the bridegroom's father and known as 'mandav-khandani' or 'mandav-kharch', that is 'tribute or expenditure of the booth'. The amount varies from five to fifteen rupees. A

26. They do not use a rhyming couplet as is done by women of the higher castes on name-taking occasions.

piece of cloth, or some money in lieu of it, is presented to the temple of Maruti in the village. This is called 'Maruti-shela'. In the Konkan, the father of the girl presents clothes to his son-in-law on this occasion. When the distribution of clothes and money is over, the barber calls the guests to offer their presents to the couple. He has to take the formal permission of the Patil and other leaders present before he starts calling them. A plate is placed in front of the couple in which the guests put the money that they desire to give. The barber calls out the name of the person who comes forward to offer his present. In the districts of Ahmednagar and Nasik, the barber first calls upon the guests from Junnar-Sinnar to come forward with their presents. Then he asks the Khades and Bhangares present to make their gifts. Next, he enquires if there be any non-Mahadev Koli who wants to make a present. People from other villages are given preference over the local villagers. The husband's father is the last to be invited by the barber. The barber gets a pice for every offer, or a lump sum of eight to twelve annas. In the Poona district, in addition to the barber, the musicians and the trader who has supplied the betel-leaves also get a share. The amount presented varies from annas two to a rupee. In the Konkan the barber does not figure on this occasion. Everyone who offers a present receives an areca-nut from the barber, or from a representative of the host as in the Konkan. The 'phal' ceremony comes to a close by the lap-filling of the bride by five married women and the bridegroom. Her lap is filled with the usual articles, namely a cocoanut, some areca-nuts, turmeric piece, some dried dates, some rice and some coins, generally five and a quarter annas.

The next morning the couple are ceremonially taken to the village well for washing their faces. After they have done so, the couple along with the bridegroom's people go to a friend's house in the village, which is called 'janosa'. From there the bride with her people proceeds to her parents' house. The husband is supposed to be displeased with his parents-in-law and the women of his family prepare to cook food for them in the friend's house as an indication of their displeasure. The bride's mother in the meantime ceremonially invites the women of the village to accompany her and help in her endeavour to pa-



cify her daughter's mother-in-law. The women go in a procession and carry with them food and provisions for the displeased mother-in-law. The food is called 'rukhat' and the provisions, 'ulpha'. In the plate containing the 'rukhat' food, are placed two small male dough-figures called 'vyahi-bhai'. The figures are intended to represent the two fathers. The provisions along with a bodice-cloth are given to the hostess. Before returning the empty plate of food and the empty winnowing fan of provisions, some four annas are placed in each of them by the bridegroom's mother. The bride, too, goes with the party, or sometimes separately, and succeeds in pacifying her husband by offering him a fruit-tree, a goat, a cow or a piece of land. The gift is called 'andan' in the way of the common Marathi terminology. The songs sung on this occasion stress the ephemeral character of the gifts and thus are intended to mollify the groom without any solid consideration. All people now come home in a procession, the husband and the wife being carried on the shoulders of some youth. On the way home, the wife keeps on beating her husband with a twisted piece of cloth holding him with another piece of cloth thrown round his neck. The husband holds the dagger in front of his neck to relieve the strangle-hold. This practice is weakening and to-day, the wife beats her husband only before they leave the 'janosa' house. Other women dance and abuse each other in rhyming couplets. The couplets refer, although exaggeratingly, to the unbecoming activities for which a village is notorious, like excessive drinking, stealing goats or hens, adulterous practices, etc. In this sense they are true to life. The women wear a spotted red sheet which they call 'phadaki' but which is called 'chunadi' in Marathi, on their shoulders and hold its hems in their hands. They dance to the accompaniment of music but do not sing as they dance. They dance in a circle, about two to ten women at a time, and freshers take their places as they retire. The abuses hurled at each other, though strong, obscene and objectionable, are received in good humour and no one takes offence on that account.

On reaching home, people dine and then gather in the marriage booth and engage the couple in some amusements. They are made to speak loudly each other's name. A leaf-roll or a clove is put into the mouth between the lips of one partner and

the other is asked to bite and cut it. Then follows the game of the areca-nut. The husband keeps a nut in the closed fist of his left hand and the wife with both her hands tries to loosen her husband's hold and take it out. When her turn comes, she uses both her hands to keep the nut well-clenched and, the husband uses only the little finger of his left hand to remove the nut from her grip. After the games the couple is bathed ceremonially. A procession, led by the 'karavali' and followed by the husband and then the wife, walks five times round the enclosure of earthen pots, within which the couple is to be bathed. The wife holds the hand of her husband who in turn holds the hand of the 'karavali' as they walk. The women sing when the procession circumambulates. The circumambulation is a regular item in every ceremonial bathing of the bride and the bridegroom. When the circumambulation is over, the husband with the wife on his shoulders steps in without touching with his feet the boundary line or an earthen pot from the enclosure. They rub oil to each other's faces and put oil into each other's ears before bathing. They rub each other's faces with turmeric paste and blow water on each other. Women present take the cue and start rubbing one another's face with turmeric and there is much fun and merriment. The husband stands behind the wife with his hands upon her shoulders and the 'karavali' pours water on them. Some water gets collected in the earthen pots in the enclosure. This water is called 'kalasavni', 'water from the pot', and is poured on the person of the wife. Women believe in the efficacy of this water in accelerating the growth of the girl. When bathing is over, the husband puts his feet in the pot of water and takes them out only when he is given a dhoti or at least a cocoanut by his father-in-law. When the couple has changed their clothes, the wife waves a lighted wick round the head of her husband. In the Konkan the wife's mother waves a lighted wick round the head of her son-in-law and puts two dough-fonts in front of his feet for him to crush. Then she throws two balls of cooked rice behind him from over his shoulders. She then moves to her daughter and repeats the procedure.

The women from the husband's side are now given water to wash their feet and then their laps are filled with the usual presents. Scented powder is rubbed on their feet before they

are washed. The wife's mother honours a woman from her family by entrusting this work to her. Another woman is honoured by being asked to wash the feet of the guests. The woman who rubs scented powder receives from the husband's mother a piece of bodice-cloth. The other woman who washes the feet receives about four annas. Sometimes the female guests take a bath at this time. The lap-filling is also entrusted to some other relative, who puts a handful of rice and a copra-half in the lap of each woman from among the guests. In return, she receives a piece of bodice-cloth from the husband's mother. The wife's mother thus utilizes this opportunity to honour some of her near relatives. Other important women from the wife's family are also honoured with a gift by the husband's mother on this occasion.

The guests now dine and prepare for their homeward journey. This dinner is called 'rasabhogache jevan'. The procession is ceremonial when it leaves the bride's village. When it passes through a village and when it nears the destination, that is the bridegroom's village. The husband and the wife are seated on horseback, the wife behind the husband. Where a horse is not used as in the eastern districts, the husband carries his wife on his shoulders. At the door, he tramples a dough-font placed in front of him and proceeds. As he steps out, he removes a twig from the roof of the booth which is spoken of as, and is symbolic of, 'stealing the booth'. He returns the twig only when he gets a cocoanut from his father-in-law. The procession first goes to the temple of Maruti in the village, and paying homage to him proceeds. On the outskirts of the village it stops and those who are unable to accompany the party meet and give a hearty send-off to the newly wedded girl, her parents and parents-in-law. If the procession happens to occur during any of the five days of the sacred Holi Fire the party is obliged to pay a rupee or a half to the people of each village on the way before it is allowed to proceed. Even on normal days, children from the villages on the way obstruct the procession and allow it to proceed when they get a copra-half. Thus winding its way, the procession stops on the outskirts of the village of destination, i.e., the husband's village where it meets the 'lezim'-players. The apparatus is worshipped and the wife's father pays to the 'lezim'-players about eight annas. The wife

of the village Mahar waves a lighted wick in honour of the couple and offers the gift of a waist-cord and a copra-half. In return she receives a piece of bodice-cloth from the wife's father.

The couple and the guests now rest in the village temple while the husband's parents, relatives and friends proceed home to make arrangements for the homeward procession of the couple and the dinner to the guests and the villagers. Cooking food for the dinner is accepted to be the responsibility of the villagers. The husband's father is responsible only for supplying them with the provisions. As the food is getting ready, invitation is sent round in the village to the people for joining the procession and for the dinner.

Food for the couple is sent to the temple. They eat a morsel or two and the cowherds present there eat the rest. In Poona district food is sent to the couple by practically every family in the village. Rice and jaggery or milk are sent. The couple or their 'karavalis' eat a morsel or so from each plate and the people present eat the rest. Those who eat put some money in the plate so that no plate is returned quite empty.

When villagers assemble, the husband's father goes in a procession to the temple for bringing the couple home. Musicians lead and a couple of youths carry the 'shevanti' flags. As it is not considered proper for the couple to join the procession directly from their seats, they are led to new seats near their original ones. The musicians start playing and as they play, people, one after another, wave a copper coin in front of the couple and throw the money towards the Mahar musicians. The 'karavalis' are the first to wave a coin and others follow. The two mothers are the last to wave. When they have done, the husband waves a coin round his wife's head and the wife round his and the waving of coins comes to a close. The Mahar musicians get the collection as Mahars.

This collection side by side with the playing of music has a standard procedure which suggests that there is some deeper meaning in the item than meets the eye or that can be ascertained to-day. The musicians are expected to collect the coins without stopping the music and/or with the help of small Mahar

boys walking on their palms with legs balanced in the air. Yelling and calling for more people, along with the performance of acrobatic feats, are invariable accompaniments.

When the waving is over, 'lezim'-players from the village and from among the guests play and show their skill. Youths, too, show their skill in individual performances. Sometimes, if the husband's father is very influential even wrestling bouts are organized. These items of amusement take a long time and the homeward procession starts late in the night when the light of torches adds to its glamour. The village Mahar places obstructions on the way and he has to be given a piece of cloth for removing the obstruction, this time by the wife's father.

As the procession reaches the husband's house, the wife's father has to give a cocoanut to the youth who has brought the couple on his shoulders before they are set down in case there is no horse. At the entrance, the husband's mother waves a lemon and some balls of cooked rice round the couple and throws them away. As the two step in, the husband's sister obstructs them by placing a pestle in their way and removes the obstruction only when her brother promises to give his daughter in marriage to her son.

On entering the house, firstly, the two make obeisance to the family gods. Then follows 'bhanuvās' otherwise called 'anarchi utaravne'. For this purpose five new earthen pots have already been placed one over the other. The pot at the top contains areca-nuts, the second some rice, the third a neck-ornament, and the fourth and the fifth are empty. The wife is expected to remove, and put on the neck-ornament without making any noise. If she fumbles and the earthen pots make a noise, it is supposed to indicate that she would desert her husband. The rice is preserved for being cooked and eaten only on the next Akshayya Tṛitiya, the bright third of the lunar month of Vaiśākha, or the 'pitar' day. In the Konkan there are two rows of earthen pots and two pots in each row. The pots to the left contain cooked rice in the one and cooked pulse in the other. Those to the right contain a string of black beads and a copra-half filled with jaggery. The wife has to take out all the things without making any noise of the pots. She keeps the

beads and the copra-half with her and serves the food to her husband. After the 'bhanuvas', the husband's mother seats her son and daughter-in-law on her lap and feeds them with some sweetened water. Her daughter-in-law then serves rice to the boys present there and mixes some raw grains in the rice for the boys to detect. If they fail to detect, they have to give her a cocoanut. The boys then take a copra-half, move to the seat of the family gods and perform 'tali bharane' in the way already described. They come out in the booth with a plate containing an idol and a lighted wick and place it on the ground. Now starts the 'dheda' dance around the idol. The husband begins it. He takes his wife on his shoulders and dances turning a couple of rounds. Then enthusiasts dance, one after another, some with the girl and some with the boy on their shoulders. Spectators beat the dancers with a twisted cloth as they dance. There is no music.

Changing the bride's name is not a general practice, although in recent years it is sometimes changed in imitation of the higher castes.

Then follow the offering of presents to the husband which are made only by the relatives-in-law and are announced by the barber. The procedure is the same as that followed at the house of the wife. Her father is the last to offer his present and in nature and value it corresponds with what he has earlier received from the father-in-law of his daughter.

The guests and the villagers are then feasted. The ceremony of 'zal dene' is performed after the dinner. The husband's mother is seated with a plate placed on her head. It contains a piece of bodice-cloth, a small mirror, a comb, a small pot of vermilion powder, a wooden rolling-pin and some red powder. The women present mark their brows with vermilion and the parting of the hair with red powder. They sing and as they sing beat the younger brother of the husband's father with a twisted cloth. He seizes the plate and makes away with it. If the host be well-to-do he entertains the guests with a 'tamasha' performance for which special troupes are invited.

Next morning the couple is ceremonially taken to the village well for washing their faces. The wife at this stage feigns being offended and her people move to a friend's house from

where they are ceremonially brought home and bathed by the husband's mother. The procedure is the same as at the village of the wife except that the 'disgruntled' wife receives no gift and that there is no beating with the twisted cloth. After the bath, turmeric is applied to the persons of the husband and the wife from their faces downwards to their feet. This is called 'halad utaravne' or getting down the turmeric and the villagers are invited for the function.

When bathing is over, the couple is seated in the booth, on a blanket, close to each other and the ceremony of removing their marriage coronets and ornamental strings, collectively called 'flowers', begins. A charpoy is used in the Konkan, and in the Poona district the husband's father's mother, and in her absence some other old lady from the family, seats the couple on her lap. Villagers are ceremonially invited for this function. Saturday is considered unlucky and avoided. There is no other taboo regarding the time and the day for this ceremony. The husband and the wife begin to undo the 'flowers' of each other and the 'karavalis' help them. The armlets are also removed. The two, along with the 'karavalis' go on the loft and tie the flowers and the armlets to the ridge-pole. In the meantime people remove the ladder and reset it only when those above or, to be more precise, the married amongst them speak aloud the name of their life-partners.

After lunch the couple engage in some entertainment of games. They play with a bodice rolled into a ball which they throw at each other and then approach their parents and other elders for their blessings with what is called the 'bhopya' in their hands. The 'bhopya' is a stone muller enveloped in a bodice and represents their child-to-be. Some ornaments are put on it and lamp-black is specked to make the representation realistic. The elders ask the couple whose child it is and they reply that it is theirs. One of the 'karavalis' accompanies them with some yellowed flour paste which she throws on the hands of the elders as they are approached. It represents excreta.

The wife's parents and their people now get ready to go home. The wife accompanies them. Under no circumstance does she stay in her new home that day. If the house of her parents is so far that she cannot reach there before sundown,

she spends the night with some relative on the way but does not hold on in her new home. Her husband, parents-in-law, and their relatives and friends accompany the party to the village boundary where the couple throw water on each other's persons. In the Poona district the wife tries to throw water on her husband without his knowledge and the husband tries to do the same. Many times nobody gets an opportunity as both are vigilant. Red powder is thrown by the people on one another and copra mixed with sugar is distributed to them before the party finally leaves. This is called 'mandav ujavane'. The copra and sugar are many times distributed earlier when the party leaves the booth. Before distributing to the people the mixture is given to five married women. Before leaving the wife's 'karavali' takes her round to her parents-in-law and other elders present, and joining her hand with theirs, says, "the girl was long ours; now she has become yours."

The very day or soon thereafter, some breads are distributed to all the families in the village. These breads are called 'mulpatichya bhakrya', breads of the root-basket. The distribution of breads may be postponed even for a year, but until it is done, the husband's parents cannot bring their daughter-in-law to their home. Next, the basket with five breads and a bodice for the bride is sent to her parents. This is called 'mulpati phiravne', 'to return the root-basket', and is usually done on the fifth day after the bride's party has gone home. Along with these breads, some more breads, jaggery and some balls of cooked rice are sent for the villagers of the bride's place. The balls of rice are from those that were used at the turmeric-rubbing ceremony of the bridegroom. The basket with this material is sent with five married women and an unmarried boy called 'gan'. When they reach the bride's house, her mother invites the women of the village 'to open' ('uchakayala') the basket. The women assemble and in their presence the basket which is packed in a piece of cloth is unpacked. The mother keeps the five breads and distributes the rest of the food to the women. The female guests and the boy are fed and they return taking the bride with them. The basket is left behind, and the mother of the bride, after about five days, sends breads in the same basket to her daughter's mother-in-law. The procedure followed at the husband's house when the basket arrives



there is similar. Those who bring the basket take the bride with them back to her parents when they return.

The parents of the husband bring their daughter-in-law home for the New Year's day. She goes back to her parents the next day. When the husband goes to his parents-in-law for the first time after the marriage he is honoured by his father-in-law with some gift. His first visit is called 'mandav-dakhavni', 'the showing of the marriage booth.'

Rubbing of turmeric, worship of the family-gods and the tutelary deities, the reciting of the sacred verses, the sacred fire of the 'agnipuja' and the lap-filling of the newly married wife are considered to be the essential rites in the whole function. As there is not much difference between the status, and more so in the social life, of married and unmarried pairs, people are not much concerned with distinguishing the essential rites from the non-essential ones.

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY II

THE bride who returns with her parents' party to her parental home does not return to her new home to live there as a member till some time after marriage. For some months or some years as the case may be, depending on the age of the wife, she remains an occasional visitor to her new home and a temporary member of that family. It is only after her first menstruation that she comes to live there as a more or less permanent member. It is then that she becomes a new member from the point of view of the members of the husband's family, and from her point of view a member of a new family. Pl. 11 shows a newly married wife from Mulund in her kitchen. Thenceforward her visits to her parental home are only occasional and depend more or less on the pleasure of the husband and his family. But the transference of not only her affection but even of her allegiance does not take place till the birth of her first child, which, be it noted, unlike the practice of higher castes, usually takes place at her new home.

But there are some marriage arrangements, though very few, which make a male a member of his future wife's family for some years even before marriage, and sometimes the membership may become even life-long as in the case of a 'gharjavai', 'the son-in-law living in the (father-in-law's) home.'

Those who have no male issue like to choose a son-in-law who would live with them. Such a son-in-law is called in the regular Marathi way, 'gharjavai'. Parents are usually reluctant to part with any of their sons and to allow him to go and live permanently with his parents-in-law. In more than three hundred marriages studied, there is only one instance of this kind from the urban centre of Mulund. This reluctance is due to real affection for their children and more to a desire to avoid being known as disaffectionate or indifferent parents. For, that is how their compliance is interpreted by the people. So there

is a tussle between economic interests and a desire not to be represented as devoid of affection. That all the sons are not going to stick on to them for long, that their daughter-in-law might move her husband against them and that, if their son's prospective home is not far off, as usually it is not, they can be close to their son even after his marriage are some considerations that go towards weakening their reluctance. The usual practice for the parents of a girl who have no son is to choose an orphan or a fatherless boy, the choice obviating all the difficulties described above. It is usually the youngest daughter who is married in this way, because she is generally liked the most and therefore desired to continue to live with them.

Another way in which a man becomes a 'gharjavai' is when a poor lad serves with his prospective father-in-law to earn his wife. The prospective father-in-law enters into an agreement with him that on a stipulated period of service by the latter he will effect the marriage of his daughter with him.

A poor boy might serve with a man for a stipulated period, the man agreeing to spend for his marriage on the completion of the term. In the majority of such contracts, the man stipulates to get the boy married to his own daughter. After the marriage, he settles his son-in-law in a new home, if the latter has no home of his own. This new home is established in the father-in-law's village. In all such cases where service is offered in lieu of the bride-price, or rather in lieu of the marriage expenses, the agreement is finalized in the presence of the people from the villages of the contracting parties so that no one might refuse to honour the obligation. Men who have stipulated to get the boy married serving with them might put off his marriage but cannot evade their responsibility altogether because of the pressure of the villagers.

There is only one family in my collection, with four sons which illustrates this practice. They are aged 31, 28, 25 and 22 respectively. They live with their mother who is 55. The second and the third sons each married after serving for nine years, the former in his father-in-law's house and the latter elsewhere. The third brother has been serving for the last two years with his mother's paternal cousin on the understanding that the uncle's daughter would be given to him in marriage. By the

time this investigation was coming to an end, news was received that the girl in question had positively declined to marry the youth and go to his distant village. The disappointed youth, it seems, is not prepared to settle down in his uncle's village and has more or less decided to break away from the service. While this illustration clearly provides the reason for the break-off of such engagements to be the reluctance of the girl to leave her home in the cases in which it is asserted that a youth after serving through a term of the agreement has broken it off, the reason is supposed to be the reluctance of the youth. It is not unlikely that as in this particular instance the reluctance of the youth does not concern the terms of agreement, but is simply his unwillingness to separate permanently from the family of his origin.

Polyandry does not prevail. Even the idea is abhorred. Polygyny, on the other hand, is not only approved but such marriages are believed to be indicative of the higher social status and the better than average economic condition of the husband. Yet people with more than one wife used to be few even when there was no law against polygynous marriages. It was a luxury only few could afford. In almost all such cases, the man had two wives. Of the 253 marital unions from Manik Ozar 12, of the 146 from Nimgiri 5, of the 121 from Devargaon only 1, and of 90 from Mulund 4 bigamous unions are recorded. There is not a single instance of a man with three or more wives in my data of over 300 marriages, nor come within the knowledge of Drs. Chapekar and Agarkar in the ten or more centres they visited and lived in.

Even in old days, it was not easy to meet with men with more than two wives. Instances, however, were reported of two men, one from Babhalwandi and another from Khadki in Ahmednagar district, who had seven wives each simultaneously. Two similar cases were reported from Jawhar. History records that Javji Bambale, the first Subhedar or Governor of Rajur, who was at the height of his glory in the latter half of the eighteenth century, had twelve wives, two of whom were non-Kolis.<sup>1</sup>

Since the law against polygamous marriages has come into

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1. Capt. Mackintosh, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

force, men are reluctant to take a second wife lest the parents of the first might drag them to a court of law. A couple of such cases were reported from the Mokhada taluka. Extorting money from their cornered son-in-law and perhaps taking revenge for the ill-treatment of their daughter, if there was ill-treatment, are said to be the motives that prompt the first wife's parents to take recourse to a law-suit. Such parents are exceptional and their action is generally not approved.

The main reason for taking an additional wife is the man's desire for a male issue and the wife's failure to bear one. The inability of the wife to cope with the household and field work is yet another reason. In the latter case, it is, many times, the wife who persuades her husband to marry again and bring her a helpmate.

For his polygynous matrimonial relationship, a man prefers a sister of his wife, provided she is younger than him, no matter whether elder or younger than the wife. He expects thereby to prevent conflicts between the wives and to preserve a congenial atmosphere in the house. It does not matter if the wife's sister is a widow.

In my Manik Ozar data, as already stated, there are twelve instances of bigamy; but in none of them are the wives related as sisters. Only in two cases, one from Mulund and one from Nimgiri, the co-wives are related as sisters.

In only one instance was the second wife brought in, because the first was either ailing or was unable to cope with the household work. Yesu Budha Kunde (55)<sup>2</sup> was married when he was about 18 years old and his wife, from the local Bote family, was about 11. He had two children by her one of whom, a daughter aged 22, is married to a Bhangare of Kavattwadi and rears a family of her own. The other child, who was a son, died early. Yesu's wife having contracted some chronic disease was unable to cope with the work, and Yesu married a widow who had already a son living at Dhamanwan with his two sons. This second wife, Sai, the daughter of a Dhindhale from Shirpunje and first married to a Baramate of Dhamanwan, is now 45 years old. Her co-wife seems to have died some years after

2. The figure in the brackets gives the age of the person at the time of enquiry.

her marriage. Sai gave to Yesu altogether eight children out of whom five were living at the time of enquiry. The eldest of these, a daughter aged 25, had three children of whom two are living. Sai's second daughter (22) has three children, and the third Sita (16) has an infant daughter. The fourth daughter Bhimi (12) has been married for five years. The only son of the union, Rama (19), has completed his eighth standard at Trim-bak where he lived in a Backward Class students Hostel. Rama was married when he was 10, his wife then being only 2 or 3. Sai's son by her first husband often comes to his mother. There has been no report of bad-feeling having subsisted between the co-wives. Altogether the family, with two wives, one with a grown-up married daughter and one with a grown-up married son from the former husband, has done fairly well as a harmonious unit.

As an instance of bigamous marriage for the sake of children here is Maruti (60) with his first wife (40) whom he married about thirty years ago and his remarried second wife, Bhagi (30), and having four children from the latter, two of whom are living. Maruti's first wife came from Maveshi. Bhagi was married to a Muthe of Manik Ozar who died while she was still a child. The children of Bhagi, a son (7) and a daughter (4), have both been married for the last two or three years.

Maruti pays a land revenue of Re. 1-4 a year and takes out 5 to 6 maunds of paddy, 2 maunds of 'nagali', 'vari' and one maund of pulses. He does not possess any cattle and manages his agriculture with hired animals.

Though the above-mentioned bigamous husbands were fortunate to solve their problem about children, there are others whose attempts have not proved successful. Thus, Lakshman (65) has a daughter Dhavalabai (30). Her husband married a second time as Dhavalabai had no children but the family has remained childless. Sometimes, it is not for merely children but specifically for a son that a second marriage is entered into. Dhanji (65) was first married when he was 15. Ten years after his first marriage he married again as he had no son. The second wife lived with him for about six years but did not have any child. She left him and returned to her father. Dhanji

and his first wife are left with their four daughters who are already married.

Sometimes, when a wife is not very docile as regards staying in her husband's house, a second marriage is contracted. Thus Vithu (55) was married about 43 years ago. His wife oft and on lived in his house during the first eight years, but from her ways Vithu and his people were not sure about her sticking to Vithu. He was married a second time when he was about 19 years old to a widow of about 15. His first wife attained puberty in a year or two thereafter and soon left him. Vithu's first daughter by her died an infant. At present Vithu has eight children and lives with his wife (42). Of the three widows (70,65,60) of Vithu's three elder brothers the youngest one lives with him. She has two daughters (22,17) both of whom are well-married. The younger one has studied upto the seventh Marathi standard from the Hostel at Ahmednagar. The other one has a daughter (3). Vithu's eldest son (20) is studying in the eleventh standard in the Akola Hostel having gone through schools at Maveshi, Rajur, Karjat (Ahmednagar), and Trimbak. He has been married for about six years. The second son (16) is still unmarried and though he has failed in the Vernacular Final, he hopes to return to Samsherpur Hostel to complete his education. Vithu's three other sons are aged ten, six and two respectively. The eldest not having taken to schooling looks after the cattle and the second is studying in the first standard. Of the three daughters (12, 8, 4), none has any schooling and the eldest, though already married, lives with him being very young.

Vithu's eldest sister-in-law who is childless lives by herself separately but in the same house as Vithu's in which she has a share. She was a remarried wife, had a daughter by Vithu's brother who died early. Vithu's other sister-in-law lives with her son in a separate house.

There are thus three household units. Vithu's and that of his youngest sister-in-law representing two units are joint and the third represented by Vithu's eldest sister-in-law is separate only for the purposes of cooking. The property of the three is looked after by Vithu. He gets out of the land 30 maunds of paddy, 12 maunds of 'nagali', 3 maunds of wheat, and more

than 4 maunds of pulses. Vithu, next to Rongate Guruji, being a keen agriculturist has begun to raise ground-nut of which he takes out three bags which would be more than 6 maunds. Vithu requires most of the corn and grain for household consumption and agricultural operations and sells paddy and some wheat which brought him this year Rs. 53-- and Rs. 32-- respectively. Vithu has 2 bullocks, 6 cows, 2 shē-buffaloes, 2 buffalo-calves, 2 sheep and 2 hens. This year he sold one bullock at the Mhasa fair and realised Rs. 170/-. Milk selling at six annas per seer, brought him Rs. 240/-. His house is big and valued at Rs. 1,000/-. The land of the three units is valued at Rs. 10,000/-. Against this asset, he is indebted to the tune of about Rs. 800/-.

It is possible that Vithu's case represents a conflict between co-wives, but we are not quite sure. In two other cases, however, it was positively stated that the first wife left her husband because she could not get on with the co-wife. Their revulsion to the co-wife and the life that was possible there was so great that one of them returned to her father and there allowed herself to be seduced away by another Koli with whom she is living as his wife without any ceremony and has a son by him. The other, however, is leading a chaste life with her well-to-do brothers.

There is at least one case in my collection which is an instance of active help by the first wife to her husband and her co-wife whom he married for children. When the co-wife came to live with her husband, the senior one left for Mulund where she lives with her brother and is employed. More or less regularly she sends her husband a few rupees and goes and lives with him when she gets leave. The second wife is a discarded woman about thirty years of age and came to live with her new husband two or three years back. She has given him a son who is about six months old.

From Devargaon is reported an instance of a bigamous marriage on the score of the husband's sexual needs. Ahili was married to Dharma (60) when she was about 4 years old and her husband about 10. Four or five years thereafter Dharma was married again because Ahili was too young to cohabit



with him. Soon after this marriage Ahili left her husband's place and nothing is known about her.

The five cases of bigamous marriage in my Nimgiri data more or less give the same percentage of such marriages as the Manik Ozar data. And some of them are very peculiar and defective as regards their age data. I have, therefore, singled them out for separate treatment in a lot by themselves.

In one case that of Mahadu (50) though he has two wives they have neither given him a child nor are they at present living with him, and he is carrying through life with his old mother. Soma (45) on the other hand with his first-married wife (40) and his second wife a remarried widow (25), though not blessed with a son by either of them, is living happily with them and has two daughters from his first wife who are already married. He is fairly well off with 20 maunds of paddy, a maund of 'nagali' and a maund of wheat, the annual yield of his land. He owns two bullocks, one cow, one calf and one she-buffalo. Savitra (27) with his first wife living but without any child has remarried a widow who is the younger sister of his first wife. She brought with her, her daughter (3) from her first husband and has given Savitra another (1). This family of five is more or less of the same economic condition as the previous one.

The two remaining cases are of persons who have married thrice and are to-day left with two wives each and never were cases of simultaneous triple marriage. The older of the two Dagdu (42) had by his first wife a daughter who died in childhood. He married for the second time but the second wife died without any child and the first wife, too, did not bear any. He then married a third wife. Further details of this family are given under cases of triple marriages. The other, Govind (37), too, has a family unit of seven with a married brother but without his mother and is only a little less well-to-do than Dagadu.

Parents offering their daughter in a polygynous marriage do enquire about the attitude of the first wife towards the proposed marriage of her husband. But this is rather formal, because in most cases wives do not dare to openly express their disapproval even if they resent their husbands' plan, and secondly because if the parents are receiving a good bride-price

for their daughter, their enquiry is only superficial. Loving parents, of course, do not give away their daughter when they know that the first wife does not approve of the marriage.

Successive multiple marriages, though quite often are due to other reasons than those which lead to simultaneous multiple marriages, are not only much more common but affect the family situation even more significantly than simultaneous multiple marriages. In such marriages, much more than in simultaneous ones, it is the custom of the Mahadev Kolis, conforming to that of many other agricultural castes of Maharashtra, that the second wife should preferably be a widow, or a castaway or divorced woman, though a previously unmarried woman is not forbidden.

In my Devargaon data out of 121 marital unions 9 are unions called 'pat' or marriage with a widow, or a castaway or divorced woman. In the Nimiri data of 146 unions 15 are such. Of the 90 marital unions of Mulund Mahadev Kolis, however, 13, that is more than 14 per cent, are such unions. The Manik Ozar data provide a percentage of such unions which is lower than this being about 10 per cent or 27 out of a total of 253 unions.

Among these people, there was no tradition of divorce.<sup>3</sup> So second marriage only meant the marriage with a widow. A woman who was discarded by her husband or who left him could live with another man only in an unrecognised union. And it must be borne in mind that though such a union was unrecognised it could be as steadfast as a marriage and the issue from it had full communal membership and rights. Divorce is now taking place, in greater and greater number, because the man cannot marry second time without being an offender under the recently passed laws against bigamy and because there is progressive disinclination to enter into unrecognised unions.

The data from Mulund, such as they are, are eloquent of the situation. Of the 90 marital unions in the 67 households studied in detail, there are 4 bigamous unions and there are

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3. Capt. Mackintosh, *op. cit.*, p. 224. S. S. Ul Hassan, however, states that the tribal panchayat in Hyderabad could sanction a divorce (*op. cit.*, p. 337). I am not satisfied that Hassan's information refers specifically to Mahadev Kolis.

3 husbands who have taken divorce from their wives. There is one man (27) who is living with a woman for the last six months or more without marrying her. He was married when he was eight years old but his wife deserted him within a month and has not been traced. He cannot marry the woman with whom he is living as he is still a married man.

If simultaneous multiple marriage creates problems for the family unit, successive multiple marriage has its own, besides being a reflection of expectations and frustrations. Sakha from Manik Ozar, a little over 45, is now living with his fourth wife aged 40, and four children by her. His old mother (60) lives at Manik Ozar and Sakha serves at Igatpuri. He was married for the first time when he was ten years old to a girl who was also of the same age. Five or six years after marriage she left him, as one may surmise on the sexual score. To-day, she is said to be living at Mulund with a man of her liking. One year after Sakha's first wife left him he married another, again of his own age, about sixteen years old. She gave him one daughter who was afterwards married away. Unfortunately Sakha's second wife died and Sakha about a year after her death married for the third time. He lived with his third wife only for three years during which period she had a son and a daughter from him. Sakha seems to have come under the influence of an elderly widow, over thirty-two years of age, and his fourth marriage with her coincided with the departure of his third wife and her children to her father's place. Sakha's fourth wife has so far given him four children the last of whom, a son, is six months old.

Sakha's budget depends on his pay, he being a Forest Guard. But he has some land at Manik Ozar for which he pays an annual revenue of Rs. 5/-. And though he does not keep any cattle he gets out of his land 9 maunds of paddy, one maund of pulses and half a maund of 'nagali', vari. His mother keeps 2 hens.

No woman is discovered to have married four times. And of the ten cases of triple marriage in the data from Manik Ozar, Ningiri and Devargaon, there are two women from Manik Ozar, and one from Devargaon who have married thrice in succession.

One is Nimbi (32), one of the daughters of a Bote. Her first marriage took place when she was nine. After a married life of about ten years, during which she had no child, she became a widow. Two years after the event she remarried. She had a daughter by her second husband. But, evidently he was tired of her or enamoured of some one else or both, and married the new woman leaving Nimbi in the lurch. Three years thereafter, Nimbi managed to secure a new husband for herself thus providing a household for herself and her daughter. From this husband she has one daughter, two years old. It may be mentioned as an interesting coincidence or fact that this family of Botes from which Nimbi comes is almost the largest in my record with eight sons and Nimbi the only daughter as the ninth.

Another example is that of Harkabai (55) the second wife of Dagdu Bote (65). Dagdu remarried her one year after his first wife's death. Harkabai was a little over thirty at that time and had already married twice and had from one of her husbands a daughter who was 5 years old at that time. Two years after her marriage with Dagdu she had one son and two daughters, of whom only the son is living. He is twenty-two years old and has passed the Vernacular Final but being unemployed he ekes out his living by labour. The family has two bullocks and two hens and possesses a small plot of land about two acres. Being inferior land the family gets about a maund and a half of paddy, a maund and a half of 'nagali', 'vari' and a sixth of a maund of pulses. They eke out their subsistence by labour.

There is a third case from Manik Ozar, of Sakhi, which I have not included in the enumeration because her second experience was of a very limited duration being a few months only and was entered into without any marriage rites though the circumstances would have permitted them.

From Devargaon is reported the case of Somi, the daughter of Dharma. This might not be strictly a triple marriage as, possibly she had gone through marriage rites only when she was first married. Somi was first married when she was ten years old and her husband sixteen. After four or five years she left him as she did not like him, and went to live with a Koli Jahagirdar. She lived with him for three or four years. As she could not give him a child the Jahagirdar turned her out. From

there she went and lived with another Koli by whom she has now three children, the eldest of whom is a son nine years old.

Three cases from Nimgiri, two from Manik Ozar and two from Devargaon are of successive triple marriages of males. Dagdu<sup>4</sup> (42) of Nimgiri had a daughter by his first wife. The daughter later died and thereafter his wife has had no child. He married by regular-marriage rites a second time and the second wife having died without a child, he married for the third time again by regular-marriage rites and has so far only one son two years old, a daughter by the same marriage having died previously. He is living with his old mother, two wives and a married brother with his wife who has yet no child. Another brother of his died earlier, sometime after his marriage, and his widow returned to her father's place, thence remarried and later died. The family owns a fair piece of land from which it extracts about 45 maunds of paddy, 5 maunds of wheat, 5 maunds of 'nagali', about a maund of pulses and half a maund of edible oil-seeds. It has 2 bullocks, 8 cows, 5 calves and 2 she-buffaloes. Its vessel wealth is represented by 2 'hundas', 1 'tapele', 1 'kalashi', 2 'bhagonis', 2 'charvis', 5 'tambyas' and 6 'tats'.

Shivram's (47) first wife died without giving him any child. He married a second time by regular-marriage rites. His second wife died leaving him two daughters both of whom are mothers, one with two children and the other with three, living with their husbands in their own families. The third time when Shivram married he took to wife a widow who had already two sons by her first husband. Both live with Shivram. One of them is married, has his wife and one daughter. Shivram by his third wife has had six children of whom five are living. Of these a daughter (13) has been married away and the eldest son (16) who has passed the Marathi fifth standard has his wife. Another member of his family is his old mother aged seventy. This family unit of twelve persons of interesting composition extracts from land about 70 maunds of paddy, 10 maunds of wheat, 5 maunds of 'nagali', about 7 maunds of pulses and a maund of edible oil-seeds. It owns 4 bullocks, 4 cows, 4 calves, 5 she-

4. This case is included in the five cases of bigamous marriage from Nimgiri.

buffaloes and 3 buffalo-calves. Shivram asserts that he sells annually ghee worth about Rs. 225/-. They keep fowl.

About the third case there is nothing very particular. The family unit is of seven persons, with the man himself as the head.

Of the two cases of triple marriage at Manik Ozar, that of Mahadu (65) is by far the most interesting. He is reputed to have been a beau in his days for whom a woman is said to have pined and died. He is a notable personality. Mahadu came to Manik Ozar from Ningiri when his mother, having contracted a remarriage with a Bote from that village, came to live at her new home. There were two other 'odhya' children—as step-children accompanying their widow-mother to her new home are called by most of the agricultural communities—one son and one daughter but they died young. It was Bote who made over some of his land to Mahadu. Mahadu evidently managed his affairs efficiently. For in place of the hut of his step-father that stood on the site he has now two good houses opposite each other and a third hut for himself where he lives with his third remarried wife (50). He was first married when he was twelve. But his wife did not live long with him; she eloped with some one and later died. About a year after her elopment Mahadu married by the 'pat' rites, a widow who had no children by her first husband. She gave Mahadu four children of whom two died in utter infancy. Of the two others, Lakshman (43) lives in one of the two houses which is also shared by the family of the other, Dagdu, who died four years back when he was about thirty-six years old. The second wife having died, two years thereafter Mahadu remarried a widow. She, too, was without any children from her former husband. She has given three children to Mahadu and is at present fifty years old. Of the three children the only surviving son Dhondu (36) lives separately with his family in the other house. It is interesting that though Dhondu lives separately, his daughter (9) by his first wife lives with her grandfather Mahadu. She has been married for about seven years but being still young has not gone to her husband. The two daughters died, one in her childhood and the other after she married and had children. This woman's is the only case of suicide among the Mahadev

Kolis on my record. Dr. Chapekar was informed that her indulgence in sexual misconduct having been detected she jumped into a well and died.

The other case is not strictly a triple marriage but is almost so. It is that of Bhau who is living with his mother and his mother's brother's son (28). Details about his life will be given in the epilogue as it illustrates the dynamics of Mahadev Koli life.

Of the two cases of triple marriage at Devargaon, Soma (49) was first married when he was ten years old. His wife was at that time about seven years of age. She died in a year or two after marriage. Soma's second marriage took place when he was seventeen years old. While his son by this wife was about two years old, she died. Two years after her death, Soma married her father's brother's daughter who is now thirty-five years old. Soma has five children by her. The eldest, a son, being eighteen years old has been married for the last three years. The son's wife is thirteen year old. The second son (15) helps in agricultural operations, the third (12) herds sheep, a daughter born after him died early and the fifth child, a daughter, is six years old. Soma's son by his second wife died when he was about sixteen years old. Soma extracts from the small area of his own and other rented land about 5 maunds of paddy, 8 of 'nagali' and a maund of 'vari. He owns 2 bullocks but does not run a bullock-cart. He has 8 sheep and keeps a dog.

The other case, that of Waman (37) is one where another cause for a second marriage operated, namely the wife's unwillingness to live with him. When he was about fifteen he was married to another girl. Waman's first wife began to live intermittently with him after this. After about ten years a daughter was born to this second wife who died in her second delivery. Waman's first wife discontinued living with him. Soon Waman married for the third time. The third wife persuaded the first wife to come and live with her. But after some time she was concerned in the only blatant seduction and incestuous union on record in my collection.

A man who is related to this woman as her mother's sister's son seduced this woman and his own mother's brother's wife and eloped with both. So Waman is now living with his third

wife, his second wife's daughter (12) who is unmarried, and his five children by this third wife. The eldest is a daughter (10) and the youngest a son (2).

The third marriage of a man is always preceded by a mock-marriage with an aucun plant. This ceremony is called Rui-manjrya and is performed irrespective of whether any or both of the first two wives are alive or not. A bachelor intending to marry a widow, too, has to perform the mock-marriage before he can marry the widow by the rites prescribed for widow-marriage. The mock-marriage with the plant is usually performed when the bridegroom is proceeding in a procession to the bride's village for his marriage. When his party is some distance from a village, the bridegroom with the priest and a couple of friends moves to an aucun that is, a 'rui' plant, in the vicinity, a curtain is held between the plant and the bridegroom and the sacred verses are sung by the priest. The idea in performing this away from any village is that the rite is not supposed to be public. The procession resumes its journey when the mock-marriage is over. Sometimes the mock-marriage is performed before the bridegroom leaves his village for his marriage but that, too, away in the jungle. In the case of a woman's third marriage there is no evidence of this ceremony or any substitute for it being performed.

I shall now illustrate from a few examples from Manik Ozar the pattern of life in a successive double marriage. Here is Bapu (60), who owing to his poverty could not contract his first marriage before forty. His wife was sixteen and soon he had a daughter by her. His wife died when he was fifty years old, and Bapu married a widow who had no children by her first husband. She lived with him only for a year and then left him for good. Since then Bapu is living alone with his daughter. She was married when she was eight years old but her husband died in an accident about ten years thereafter. While living with her father she became pregnant. According to one of the less respectable customs she was 'pushed' into the house of a lame man. But he did not prove to be as weak in his will as in his body and the woman was turned back to her father. She is with her son now and runs her father's household.

Bapu has a piece of land for which he pays a revenue of



Rē. 1-4-0. The land being very poor, he gets only three maunds of 'nagali', 'vari' from it. Of the animals, he possesses only a hen and that too rented to him on the basis of half the yield. In effect the household is run on the labour of the father and the daughter.

Here is Anaji (26), perhaps the youngest among the twice-married at present. He was first married when he was eighteen and his wife about nine. She lived with him for two years and then left him without any trace. Three years back he married a widow who had no children by her first husband. She has given Anaji one son (2). Anaji's father is sixty years old and mother forty-eight years. He has two married brothers and three unmarried ones. None of the married brothers has any child as yet. One of them studied upto the seventh. Of the unmarried brothers, one is studying at Trimbak in the ninth standard, and another at Samshepur in the seventh. Anaji has two married sisters. The one elder than him (28) has five children. The eldest of them, a daughter, is schooling at Jawhar. The sister's husband is employed in the Forest Department at Jawhar. He is one of the nephews of the brother-in-law of the Raja of Jawhar. The other sister (17) was married only a year ago. Her husband, too, is employed in the Forest Department. This household of twelve people is supported on a piece of land for which Anaji pays an annual revenue of Rs. 20/-. He extracts from the land 25 maunds of paddy, 10 maunds of 'nagali', 'vari' and 6 maunds of pulses. It owns 3 bullocks, 10 cows, 4 calves and 10 hens. The family is known altogether to be leading a successful and harmonious life. I began the account with Anaji not only because he is the twice-married person but because Anaji's ability has made him to be looked upon as the head of the family.

Rama (55) was first married when he was eleven and his wife nine years old. She bore him a son but after the son's death she left him. She is known to have lived at Mulund or Bombay and to have had children before she died. Rama married a second time when he was about thirty-three years old. He is living with that wife who is thirty-six and has borne him altogether four children of whom one daughter and one son are living. The son who is ten years old is studying in the fourth

standard at the local school and was twice plucked. Rama has been more lucky in his daughter (20), who took her Vernacular Final examination and is now a teacher. She is married to a primary teacher and has a daughter (3). Rama's family of three subsists on a piece of land for which Rama has to pay an annual revenue of Rs. 8/-. It yields him about 15 maunds of paddy, 6 maunds of 'nagali', 'vari' and 4 maunds of pulses. At the time of enquiry he was selling at Rajur one and a half seer of milk per day. He has only one bullock and borrows another from his sister's son. He has 5 she-buffaloes and 2 hens.

The approach to a widow for marriage and the ceremonial paraphernalia of such a marriage are different and are particularly interesting from a comparative viewpoint. The following brief account of these gives a fairly complete picture.

So long as a widow lives with her parents-in-law, it is presumed that she does not intend to get married. The father of a widow is approached with a proposal for her, unless she is living independently in which case she herself is approached. But on no account is the proposal for a widow addressed to her father-in-law. It is always a widower who seeks a widow's hand; bachelors marrying a widow are an anathema. If the widow is a small girl usually her father waits till she comes of age. There is no upper limit to the age of marriage for a widow. Women marrying after their menopause are known. 'To bake bread and to sleep away' is a saying current in the society which indicates that no woman is considered too old for her marriage and that post-menopause marriages do not intrigue the people. In the majority of cases, however, the widow-brides are not more than 35 years old. Widows who are mothers of grown-up sons are reluctant to get remarried. Younger children do not create a problem as the father's family is recognized as their undisputed guardian. If the father's family is indifferent and the widow is living at her parents' with her children, the widower stipulates to take the children under his care after his marriage with her.

The rules of exogamy have to be observed even here as in the case of the first marriage. For this purpose, not only the family-name of her father, but also that of the first husband, or those of the prior husbands, as the case may be, has to be taken

into account. In the districts east of the Sahyadri, even the 'gotri' families of the prior husbands which were taboo to them are in strict theory expected to be tabooed to her. But Dr. Chapekar was assured more than once that the taboo being too restrictive is more often broken than observed.

The initiative is taken by the widower who ascertains by an informal enquiry if the widow intends to get married. When he has made sure that she does, he goes with some friends to her father and if the father approves of his offer, discusses the terms. The terms cover the amount of the bride-price, the grain, and ornaments and clothing for the bride. The conventional bride-price is Rs. 60/-. But according to the demand for the widow, it may rise even to Rs. 400/-. The amount of grain is fixed and is the same as that for the first marriage, namely, two maunds and a quarter. The ornaments normally mean a neck-ornament and a pair of armlets, although much more might be demanded. Similarly, although an ordinary sari, a bodice, a sheet for a covering are clothes that should be asked for, a costly sari is many times demanded. A widow might even make a needy widower assign some land to her or to some of her sons before consenting to marry him. The case of Mahadu of Manik Ozar, fully detailed above, is an instance in point. The terms are later formally confirmed in the presence of the villagers at a ceremony called 'Khandayacha vidhi', 'rite for discussing terms' or 'Kunku lavayacha vidhi' as in the first marriage. The formal confirmation refers only to conventional terms; extra demands are satisfied in an informal and secret way.

A Brahmin priest is consulted for the auspicious day, though not always. The fifteen days of the bright half of the month, the New Moon Day, and Saturday are avoided. The marriage rites as among other agriculturists, are always performed at night and that, too, a dark one.

A Brahmin priest conducts the rites. Cloth for the marriage is bought ceremonially in the way it is done at a regular marriage. Turmeric is applied to the legs below the knees and to the hands from the elbows towards the wrists of both of them. Neither the marriage coronet nor any string of flowers adorns the brows either of the widow or of the bridegroom. There is no booth. The other preliminary ceremonies are dis-

pensed with. Villagers are ceremonially invited. The bridegroom feasts some of his relatives and friends and then simply walks with them to the bride's village. He always starts so as to reach his destination by evening. He is accompanied by a man who blows the horn and rarely by other musicians. If a Mahar is not available, some one from the party blows the horn. The groom waits at a friend's house in the bride's village but never in a temple. The presentation of new clothes takes place at the bride's house. The villagers are invited to the marriage ceremonially by the bride's father.

The bride and the bridegroom are now seated on low wooden stools near each other facing east, the bride to the left of the bridegroom. The Marathi term 'pat' is used in two senses : to denote a low wooden stool and to denote a widow-marriage. It is on this account that the stool which is now used for seating the bridegroom and the bride is traditionally and conventionally tabooed in the regular marriage among the Mahadev Kolis. To-day, however, there are many people, especially in the Konkan, who ignore the taboo. The bridegroom worships the planets and the god Ganapati, and the bride waves a lighted wick in front of the bridegroom and marks his brows with wet vermilion on which she then sticks some rice. The bridegroom does the same to the bride. The priest marks her brows with wet vermilion and asks the two to pronounce each other's name. The two who are now husband and wife, proceed to pay their homage to the idols in the house. Married women are enjoined not to witness the ceremony. One of the older authorities,<sup>5</sup> writing on the Mahadev Kolis, has stated that a widow after her remarriage lies in concealment for three days. Not only is this not the practice to-day, but also even oldest Mahadev Kolis of to-day are unaware of its former existence. And there is positive evidence in the current ceremonies that she cannot lie concealed for more than one night.

The ceremony is followed by a vegetarian feast, in lieu of which, quite often a sum of Rs. 5/- to Rs. 25/- is paid to the villagers. The distribution of the booth-money is also simplified, only the priest and the Patil receiving two rupees each.

5. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XVII (Ahmednagar), p. 206.

The husband does not stay at his wife's house but proceeds with some friends straight home. If it is not quite near, he spends the night in a village on the way. His relatives and friends come home with the wife the next evening. The wife waits for her husband in some friend's house when she reaches his village. The husband goes there and the hems of their garments are knotted together. They are brought home from there in a procession after it is dark. The procession is led by musicians or a horn-blower and a 'lezim' party. The villagers are feasted by the husband. The feast is called 'gharbharaniche jevan', 'the feast of house-filling.' Once a remarried widow comes to her husband's house she continues to stay there, unlike a girl marrying for the first time who accompanies her people back to her parents.

In the Konkan the husband does not go ahead but accompanies his wife and the rest of the party when they go home the next day. On the outskirts of the husband's village the two embrace a fruit-bearing tree, either mango or jack-fruit, while the hems of their garment are knotted together. The embrace is believed to transfer their guilt to the tree. The knot of their garments is undone only when they reach their home.

As girls are generally married at a tender age, pregnancy resulting from fornication is very rare. Abortion is attempted in such cases. In the alternative, some needy man marries the pregnant girl and the issue is brought up by him as his child, the child taking his name. There are three such cases in my record of Manik Ozar.

When a widow is delivered long after her husband's death so that her child cannot reasonably be said to be posthumous and legitimate, she and her relatives try to hide the aberration by maintaining that the foetus was in her womb all the time. Such a foetus is called 'savadu'. If, however, so much time has elapsed that even that explanation is obviously inadequate, the villagers ask her to name the father of the child and get him to marry her. He is required to give a goat or a dinner to the people by way of fine before he is made to marry her.

When a woman was found to be having illegitimate intimacy with a non-Koli, she used to be outcasted. The rule was rigorously enforced if the man belonged to an 'inferior' caste.

With the weakening of the panchayat, the enforcement of the rule, too, is weakening. The progeny of Koli women from Brahmins pass as Kolis without much difficulty. Such cases are reported frequently from Trimbakeshwar where Koli girls work as house-servant with Brahmins.

The adjustments about so-called illegitimate pregnancies and 'pushing' of a woman whether described directly or incidentally in the foregoing account, and the fact that an unsuccessful 'pushing' does not create bad feelings or an impasse should incline a student of this community to expect some cases of union, of man and woman living as husband and wife, without any ceremony. In Manik Ozar there are five unions in which the woman is living with her husband without having gone through any marriage rites. One of these women had previously similarly lived with another man for some time.

There is only one case which is included among the five in which the husband has not gone through any marriage ceremony. Nivritti, a man of thirty-one years and a bachelor till about two years back, has living with him for the last two years a widow aged thirty-six. Her first marriage had taken place when she was fifteen years old and her husband had died when she was barely twenty. How she whiled away the intervening sixteen years could not be ascertained. This is almost a solitary case of a male living with a consort older than him. It is noteworthy that Nivritti is a member of a joint family headed by his mother (55). From time to time, however, Nivritti and his consort quarrel with his mother and for some time cook separately. Other members forming the joint household are Nivritti's brother (25) and his wife. Another brother of Nivritti (28) lives separately with his father's sister. Though he has been married he has practically discarded his wife.

Nivritti's family land bears a revenue of two rupees a year. The family cultivates some more land on rental basis. They produce annually about 5 maunds of paddy, as much of 'nagali', 'vari', less than half a maund of gram and about one-third maund of wheat. They own 1 bullock, 1 she-buffalo, 3 buffalo-calves and 2 hens. Much of their subsistence has to be derived from labour.

It must have been plain from the circumstances of the cases narrated above that among the Mahadev Kolis it is as often as not that a second marriage is the result of a woman leaving her husband as that of a husband discarding or bypassing his wife. Some three years back, leaders in the community had collected statistics about seductions in the Akola taluka and, it is said, that they had recorded about two hundred cases. In 1934-35 they had launched a campaign to persuade and send back to their husbands seduced women. But when some leaders approached a retired police constable at Sakirwadi who was accused of being a seducer, he dragged them to a court of law and it was only after much expense and after what seemed like endless journeys to Akola, the taluka town, that they were finally discharged. The campaign naturally died down.

In the total number of 253 unions on my Manik Ozar record there are twenty women representing as many unions who left their husbands for one reason or another. In five cases representing six unions the economic condition of the husband is poor. Of these in three cases, the woman is a first-married wife. In one case she is a remarried widow. The fifth case is that of double desertion, the first and then the second remarried wife leaving the husband. Of these, in five cases there is no child. In the sixth case, that of Jani (27), the woman had two daughters by her first husband on whose marrying another woman, Jani, finding it impossible to carry on with her co-wife, went to live with her sister. While in residence there, a guest of her sister successfully seduced her away. She has been living with him without marriage—she cannot do better—and has given him one son.

There are four cases in which the economic conditions are fair. In three, the deserting wife is a first-married one. In the fourth case she is a second-married wife. Three of them have had no child. One of these three, the second-married wife, expressly remarried because the first marriage was not fruitful. Finding her second marriage too unfruitful she left the husband and returned to her father's place where she is known to be a good character. The fourth case is that of a woman who is now dead. She had a son by the husband, whom she left after the son died. From her new union, too, she had children.

There are six cases representing nine unions in which the economic conditions are good. Eight of these women are first-married wives and one is a widow. Of the first-married wives, two are second and third wives respectively of their husbands. In both cases, the first wives had similarly left the husband. One of these husbands, Sakha, as stated earlier, is a four-times married man. The other case is of a particularly unsuccessful husband. This man's first wife, though from his maternal uncle's family and though the couple was already come of age, he being twenty-four and the wife fifteen, left him after three years of married life during which there was no child. From her next union, she has now two children. His second wife whom he married when he was twenty-nine left him, after living with him for seven years during which period she had no child, and went to live with her father. Further information about her is not available. About six years after his second wife had left him, a young woman again from his maternal uncle's family who had just then returned to her father as a widow lived with him as his wife for about eight months. Thereafter she left him.

In three cases of first-married wives, they left their husbands almost at their puberty. Of two nothing further is known while the third is known to have remarried and to be rearing a fair family. One of the first-married firstwives, Jankabai, left her husband after having lived with him fairly long and having also tried to live with her co-wife for some time. She returned childless to the place of her brother Lakshman whose household will be described under extended family units.

In the twentieth and last case, that of Bapu's daughter's daughter, nothing specific is known.

There are four cases of wives leaving their husbands in the 146 marital unions studied at Nimgiri.

As against twenty wives leaving their husbands, there are only two wives, including one already referred to in another context, who have been discarded by their husbands. Eknath's wife is the woman already referred to. He (28) had earned her by offering his services for nine years. He married her eight years back when she was six years old. His wife is not willing to live with him where he is living, namely with his father's sis-



ter at Manik Ozar. The woman is the daughter of a remarried widow who lives with her husband at Ekdare. She desires her husband to live with her either at his or at her mother's place.

The other woman is Lakshmi (26). She was married when she was eleven years old and had two children by her husband both of whom died. Her husband who comes from Kelungan having discarded her, she is living for the last four or five years with her father at Manik Ozar. One of her three brothers having passed the Vernacular Final is now working as a voluntary teacher at Kumshet but his wife as yet lives with the family at Manik Ozar.

Two sisters of Lakshmi, younger than her are already married and though one of them is a widow she still lives with her three daughters at her father-in-law's. The family unit thus consists of the father, Laxmi, her two married brothers with their wives and their five children and the wife of the teacher and an unmarried brother of Lakshmi, in all thirteen, and including the teacher fourteen.

This is one of the few families of Manik Ozar which can boast of fresh purchase of land. Nago, the eldest son in the family and the manager now, bought last year about half an acre of good paddy land. The family land bears an annual land revenue of two rupees and four annas. From all land the family extracted last year 8 maunds of paddy, 4 of 'nagali', 'vari' and 2 of pulses. It owns 2 bullocks, 6 cows, 2 calves, 1 she-buffalo, 7 sheep and 2 hens. It is a family with a prestige, Nago being a well-known 'bhagat' that can get possessed.

In the Nimgiri data against four wives that have left their husbands for one reason or another, there is one, Gangu, who has been discarded by her husband and is living with her mother and brothers. Dhaku (25) who is the elder of the two brothers but younger than Gangu has his wife and two children. His younger brother (16) has his wife but no child yet. Gangu's younger sister (22) is doing well with her family and has three children, two sons and one daughter. With Gangu, Dhaku's household to-day is composed of eight persons and is well off. The family land yields for them 40 maunds of paddy, 3 of

'nagali', 'vari', and about as much of wheat. The family possesses 2 bullocks, 2 cows, 2 calves, 5 she-buffaloes and 1 buffalo-calf.

Of the 77 households at Manik Ozar, 7 are composed of a singleton each. In the remaining 70 households there are 106 adult males, 107 adult females, 63 boys and male infants and 65 girls and female infants, altogether making a total of 344 persons. The 70 households are as many families, each unit having on an average 4.91 persons. The adults average 3.04 and the non-adults 1.87 per unit.

Of the 174 Mahadev Koli households at Devargaon 50 were successfully contacted for detailed investigation. They have altogether 270 persons, giving an average of 5.4 persons per unit. There are 71 adult males, 67 adult females, 78 boys and male infants and 54 girls female infants in the total. We have on an average 2.80 adults and 2.64 non-adults per unit.

50 households of Nimgiri with an identical number of families have altogether 274 persons, giving an average of 5.6 persons per family. There are 92 adult males, 96 adult females, 48 boys and male infants and 38 girls and female infants. The adults average 3.8 and the non-adults 1.8 per unit.

Such details are available for 67 families of Mulund. The total of 214 persons in these families gives an average of 3.2 persons per unit. There are 78 adult males, 66 adult females, 38 boys and male infants and 32 girls and female infants. The adults average 2.15 and the non-adults 1.05 per unit.

The preponderance of adults in Mulund data is only slightly greater than that of Manik Ozar, a feature which corroborates the general observations that are made in the epilogue that shifting to Mulund is more in the nature of a family movement than mere adult migration for work. It also substantiates my opinion about the Mahadev Kolis' attachment to their family and fondness for their children.

Perhaps it is the irony of the biological trait of a population that a poor population like that of Devargaon should have the largest percentage of non-adults in the composition of its families. In the other three centres the proportion of children in the composition of a family unit would have been much greater but for the fact that child mortality is rather high among them. The highest rate of child mortality is given by the Mulund data.

In the 67 families studied, of the 107 children born upto the date of enquiry 31.8 per cent had died when they were four or less. In the Ningiri data of 244 children the mortality rate worked out at 30.7 per cent. Of the 472 children recorded in Manik Ozar 23.7 per cent had died when they were four or less. Strangely enough the child mortality among 234 children born in the 50 families of Devargaon was the lowest, being 17.5 per cent.

With a view to studying the fertility a sustained effort was made to secure specific data about age, marriage and birth. And from the Manik Ozar data 59 marriages, from Devargaon 57 and from Mulund 54 furnished the relevant facts. The average age of husbands in these marriages at the time of enquiry was 36.1 in the Manik Ozar data, 28.8 in the Devargaon and 30.68 in the Mulund marriages. The corresponding average age of wife was 29.8, 24.2 and 24.26 respectively.

For ascertaining the period of the duration of marriage all the marriages considered are continuing marriages. If the wife was fourteen years of age or over at marriage the period is taken to begin with the marriage year; but if she was below fourteen, the period is counted to begin with the year when she completed her fourteenth. On this computation the average duration of a marriage of this sample is for Manik Ozar data 15.5 years, 10.2 for Devargaon and 9.72 for Mulund. On an average the number of children a marriage has is 3.2 for Manik Ozar, 3.0 for Devargaon and 1.6 for Mulund. It may be mentioned that the very low average of children of a Mulund marriage is not due to a very large number of women having been sterile. It is easily observed that it is not necessarily due to the shorter average duration of the Mulund marriage. For, the average duration of a Mulund marriage is hardly half a year shorter than that of a Devargaon marriage. The difference in the average number of children of a marriage, however, is 1.4 which is more than 75 per cent. And it is seen that the average Manik Ozar marriage has only 0.2 child more than the average Devargaon marriage, though its duration is actually 50 per cent longer than that of the latter. In the Manik Ozar marriages 28.8 per cent of the wives had no children till the time of enquiry whereas in the Mulund data 25.9 per cent were childless. In the Devargaon marriages the percentage of childless wives is the lowest being 21.1. It is further seen from the above figures

that neither in regard to the age of the husband nor that of the wife nor again in regard to the difference in ages of the husband and wife do the Mulund marriages stand apart from those of Manik Ozar or of Devargaon. As a matter of fact they just stand between the marriages of Manik Ozar and those of Devargaon.

Perhaps, partially at least, the explanation for the above-mentioned feature lies in the fact that children are born rather late in the Mulund marriages as the average age of a surviving child in these data shows. In the Mulund marriages 69 children were found to be surviving at the time of enquiry and the average age worked out at 5.4 year. As against this the 132 surviving children of the Manik Ozar marriages averaged 12.9 years and the 138 children of the Devargaon marriages 8.0 years.

The incidence of mortality among children, too, may be a factor concerned in the average number of children born to a marriage.

It is noticed that the data of this sample as between Manik Ozar and Devargaon show proportionate mortality among children. The children of Manik Ozar marriages that have survived have done so after having on an average about one-third life longer than those of the Devargaon marriages, the average age of the surviving child of the former being 12.9 years against the 8.0 years of the latter. From this fact we should expect the mortality among children of the Devargaon marriages to approximate to two-thirds that of the mortality of the children of Manik Ozar marriages. In actual fact this expectation is almost completely satisfied. For, whereas out of the 3.2 children, on an average, born to a Manik Ozer marriage 2.24 have survived, out of the 3 children born to a Devargaon marriage 2.42 have done so. The incidence of mortality among children born to Mulund marriages, too, conforms to this reasoning and expectation. The number of children surviving per marriage in the Mulund data is 1.28 out of the average number of 1.61 born to it. Altogether, therefore, the low number of children born to a marriage in the Mulund data is not properly explained.

Considering the composition of the family unit it is seen

that of the 50 families from Nimgiri 36.0 per cent, of the 77 of Manik Ozar 49.4 per cent, of the 50 of Devargaon 54.0 per cent and of the 67 of Mulund 82.1 per cent are nuclear families. The unit consists of the head, the husband, his wife if any and unmarried children if any whether own, step or adopted. It is seen that the percentage, as would be expected, is incomparably the highest in the Mulund area and the percentage in the Nimgiri data is the lowest and absolutely speaking rather low. The poor Devargaon area shows a percentage of nuclear families which is much higher than this, almost 50 per cent higher; and in the Manik Ozar data, omitting the seven cases of singleton units, either man or woman, the percentage of nuclear families works out to 54. Is it the better economic condition of the Nimgiri people that accounts for the larger percentage of non-nuclear families among them?

There are two family units in Manik Ozar which consist of either a man or a woman, the former a widower and the latter a widow, with in the former case a widowed daughter and her son, and in the latter an unmarried son and for all practical purposes nuclear-like in so far as there is no extension. In the Devargaon data there are four units in each of which there is an addition to the nuclear family of a dependent relative. In two cases the dependent relative is a widowed sister and in the other two it is deceased brother's unmarried sons. In Nimgiri data, too, there are three nuclear family units with such an extension. In one the relative is a dependent one, being the unmarried daughter of a deceased brother and in the other two it is younger unmarried brothers. Among the Mulund families three nuclear units have extensions of this nature. One of them has a relative of the above pattern, only a little more distant. She is an unmarried daughter of a deceased son of the head's mother's sister. The other two cases, in both of which the dependent relatives are wife's brothers, must be considered to be an urban and new pattern.

A household with man, his wife and children and one of the parents, the other being dead, living without or with the head's unmarried brothers and sisters is not a nuclear family unit in the proper sense of the term. Yet it is such an extension of it that for practical purposes it works like a nuclear unit. In

most of the cases the living parent is the mother. Of the 70 families of Manik Ozar 6 fall under this category out of which in one, the living parent is the father. In the 50 Devargaon households, there are 5 such units and in the 50 Nimgiri households, there are 6. Of the 67 Mulund households, however, only 4 units answer to this description. If such family-units are combined with the nuclear units and the percentage is computed on the combined basis then the difference between Mulund data and Nimgiri data is slightly reduced. All the same not only is this difference fairly large but also the difference between the Devargaon data and the Nimgiri data remains more or less the same. On the whole, I have to conclude that the pattern of living in family units in the Nimgiri area is slightly different from that current in the other Koli agricultural areas and is much more so from that seen in the urbanised Mulund.

In a family unit where both the parents are living with one of the sons married and with other sons and daughters unmarried, the composition still makes for unitary control and in the agricultural surrounding the stresses and strains in the working unit are not severe. Among the 70 families of Manik Ozar, there are 11 with lineal extension. In 6 of them the head, with or without his wife, and with son or sons, their wives and children forms a straightforward lineally extended family-unit of three generations. In one there are three generations and the grandfather is the father of the head. It is a unit, therefore, with potentialities of great-grand-children, though as yet there is none. The father Harku is eighty years old and his eldest son's eldest son is fifteen. And though the latter has been married for three years he has no child as yet. His wife must have matured by this year. I shall give a brief description of this extended family which serves fairly well as a representative of the class of extended families in this region.

Harku's is almost a unique case of a man living with his first and only wife (65) to such green old age. Harku had altogether nine children. Of them one son died in infancy. His eldest child, a daughter died fifteen years ago leaving two sons who are married. Harku's other daughter, Nimbi, I have already referred to in another connection. She has at present one daughter. All the six sons of his are married. Two of

them (36, 26) are employed and live at Dhamangaon. They have no children as yet and have a share in the family house in which at present there are three hearths. Soma (40), the eldest living son has his wife and five children and it is with them that Harku and his wife form one family unit. Bhau (30) who keeps a separate hearth in the house is at present living all alone by himself, his wife having died childless three years ago. Barku (28), married for over six years, is still childless and keeps the third hearth in the house. Bhiva (38) has a separate thatched hut of his own. The poor man is childless, all his five children having died in their infancy.

The estate of the family has only recently been partitioned. It consists of a piece of ancestral land bearing an annual revenue of about two rupees and eight annas and a larger piece of land with a revenue of four rupees and eight annas acquired during Harku's life-time. The total income derived from this land is 12 maunds of paddy, 15 of 'nagali',  $2\frac{1}{2}$  of wheat and about 5 of of pulses. They possess 2 bullocks, 6 cows, 3 she-buffaloes and 2 sheep.

Another of the six cases is that of Dhondu. In this family in addition to son's children there are also daughter's children.

Dhondu (60) and his wife (55) have six living children out of eight born. They are a family unit of thirteen, though in actual living at Manik Ozar house, there are only eight. Of these, three are daughter's daughters, and only one supposed and accepted to be the daughter of his son, who is living with him. This son Hona (31) is already referred to as an epileptic and slightly insane man. His wife had left him for some time but has returned and is now living with the family along with the daughter she brought with her. Of the three mentioned above, two daughters have been left with Dhondu by his daughter (27) who is already referred to in another connection, they being her children by the husband she has discarded. The other daughter's daughter living with him is a widow and lives with him in spite of the fact that her mother, a remarried widow, has a household of her own with her new husband and one daughter.

Dhondu's eldest son (37) is employed at Mulund where he lives with his wife and his son who is schooling. One daughter

of his died in infancy. Rāma (25), another son of Dhondū, having passed the Vernacular Final, and studied up to the fourth standard English is working as a peon in the Mamlatdar's office at Dahanu. He got married in the year of enquiry. The late age of marriage and that too with a mature girl of fifteen though not schooled are the new signs on the horizon. Naturally like his elder brother, Rāma living at Dahanu does not come in the counting of the actual family unit at Manik Ozar. His wife lives with her father and has not yet joined Rāma. The third daughter of Dhondū—two are already referred to—is not only economically well off but also maritally well settled. It is Mani (23). Her husband, a police constable at Thana, began service in the then State of Jawhar with the influence of his father's brother who is the Raja's sister's husband. The couple has four children, three school-going sons, and one daughter.

The original economic condition of Dhondū had been very poor. And even now it is poor though his eldest son has bought new land for him. Altogether his land at Manik Ozar, at Kelungan and at Gondoshi bears a land revenue of Rs. 7-8-0. Dhondū receives from his land only 6 maunds of paddy, 10 of 'nagali', 'vari', and one and a half of pulses, and owns 2 bullocks, 2 cows and 2 calves.

Here is another of the six family units the head of which Hona, like Harku, is eighty years old. It is a Patil family and a household of fourteen people. In this case the head is a widower. He has five sons living. He and his sons, everyone of them, are separate in estate. His two daughters are married. He lives with one of his sons, his third child. This son (34) has had five daughters of whom three are living. The eldest (5) has been married over four years. The second is three years old and the third is an infant. Hona and Punaji, with whom he is living, together get 14 maunds of paddy, 6 of 'nagali', 'vari', 2 of wheat and one of pulses. They own 2 bullocks, 1 cow and 1 calf. Punaji and two other sons share the ancestral house between them keeping separate hearths.

One son of his (32) lives with his wife and children in a separate tiled house of his own. He has three sons and one daughter. His eldest son (10) is in the Marathi fourth standard.



He owns 1 bullock and gets from his land 10 maunds of paddy, 10 of 'nagali', 'vari', and 2 of pulses.

His another son Tukaram (36) has his first wife and two sons and two daughters living. His three children died. His eldest son (11) is studying in the seventh at the Samsherpur Hostel. He has married for about six years. He works on blasting operations. He owns one bullock, one cow, one calf and extracts from his land 35 maunds of paddy, 8 of 'nagali' 'vari' and 4 of pulses. He has a bullock-cart.

Hona's fifth child Ganu (30) and his wife have three daughters, the eldest being five years old. He owns four cows but no bullock and gets only 10 maunds of paddy, 10 of 'nagali', and a maund of pulses from his land.

The seventh child Rama (26) has two sons, the eldest of whom is only two and a half years. He lives with his wife and children and owns two bullocks and gets barely 8 maunds of paddy, 3 of 'nagali', 'vari', and a maund of pulses. The total land of the household bears a revenue of Rs. 13/- a year.

Hona's eldest daughter (40) has all her nine children, six sons and three daughters, living. All the three daughters are married and one of them (20) has had three children already of whom two sons are living. Hona's other daughter (28) after being a widow has remarried. She has now a son and a daughter. Both the daughters are residents of Manik Ozar.

It is seen that Hona Patil has great-grand-children but they are through his daughter. It is a rare case.

Here belongs Anaji's case which has already been described under cases of the twice-marrieds.

Nago (28) has his father living with whom he lives along with two brothers, all three of them married, and five children, four his and one his brother's. And with his discarded sister the family is a unit of thirteen. It has already been described.

Out of these six cases of lineally extended three generations families, in one, man, his wife and his son's children are living but his son and daughter-in-law are dead. Khandu (70) lives with his wife and his son's two children, a daughter and a son (10, 8). His daughter-in-law survived his son for three

years and was living with the family. Khandu's daughter (40) is married and lives at Sakirwadi. She has eight of her nine children living, three sons and five daughters. Khandu's is a middling household for though he possesses land bearing an annual revenue of five rupees he gets only 10 maunds of paddy, 4 of 'nagali', half a maund of wheat and a maund and three-quarters of pulses. He possesses 2 bullocks, 3 cows and 1 hen. As in the above case, in three other family units there is only one son; and in the remaining two there are two married sons in each.

There are two extended family units where married brothers with children of one or more are living together. In one of them it is one of the brother's widow who is living in the joint household, another brother's widow living separate with her son. In the other case, the widow mother is living. This is the household of Lakshman (40), and his two brothers (38, 35) and his mother (60). All the three brothers are married. Lakshman's wife is thirty and his brother's wives are twenty-five and twenty respectively. He has three children, one daughter (9) and two sons (6, 1). None of them is schooling. His brother has three children living, two sons (6, 4 months) and one daughter (3). Five children died. The third brother has no child yet. With him lives his sister Jankabai whose case has already been referred to. Lakshman has another married sister (33) who has her household at Balthan. She has three children, a daughter (16), already married, another (9) and a son (6) who is schooling in the Marathi second standard.

The family pays an annual land revenue of Rs. 4-4-0, some of its land being at Rajur. It is one of the few well-off families in this locality. It gets from its land 60 maunds of paddy, 20 of 'nagali', 'vari', 5 of wheat and 8 of pulses. It is the richest family in this village in animal wealth, owning 4 bullocks, 12 cows, 6 calves, 1 she-buffalo and 1 he-buffalo calf, 14 sheep and 10 hens. It is one of the few families in this village which has a separate cow-pen technically known among the people as 'bangla'. It owns a bullock-cart. A feature of this family is that as in some extended family units of three generations it is not the eldest member who is looked upon as the manager of the family. In the three generations units it is many times the

eldest son and not the father, and in this case it is the younger and not the eldest brother who manages the household.

There are nine family units which are extended no doubt but are composed at present of two generations, one or more of the sons being married and the daughter-in-law or the daughters-in-law forming members of the unit. Such households are straightforward cases and I shall content myself by describing only one of them.

Here is one of the very well-to-do family, that of Bhaga (55), living with his first wife (45) for about thirty years. The couple had eight children of whom five are living. Of these the daughter (15) was married in the year of enquiry her husband being educated upto the fifth standard Marathi. Of the four sons (23, 21, 18, 12) two are married, but they have no child as yet. The eldest has passed the Vernacular Final. He used to go to Rajur daily to attend school. The other two have not taken any schooling, the younger owing to deafness. The youngest son (12) is schooling in the second standard.

Bhaga pays a land revenue of Rs. 35/- a year and gets from his land 80 maunds of paddy, the largest paddy crop of any single unit at Manik Ozar. He gets 16 maunds of 'nagali', 'vari', and as many of pulses. His cattle wealth is not very great. He owns 2 bullocks, 2 he-buffaloes, 1 cow, 3 calves, 1 she-buffalo, 2 buffalo-calves and only 2 hens. Bhaga's son Jija is an owl fancier.

In these data the biggest family unit is seen to be comprised of fourteen members. Dr. Chapekar did not come across single household at Manik Ozar with twenty or more members in it. But at Rajur he was informed by the Circle Inspector of Revenue Department that he knew of between fifty to sixty families in the eighty-two Mahadev Koli villages of Akola taluka each consisting of twenty or more members.

In the 50 families of Ningiri, there are altogether 23 extended family units. Of them, 11 families are three generations units, with grand-children in the family. In three of them there is a further extension; in one step-children, in another a father's brother and in the third the head's mother's sister's son. In

one of these extended families a widowed daughter forms an additional member.

Of the 23 units 7 extend to two generations. In six of these the nuclear family is extended by married son or sons of the head and his daughters-in-law. The remaining one, though a two generations unit can be grouped even more properly under the category of the extended family of brothers living together, with or without one or the other parent. The doubly classable unit is formed by two married brothers, their mother, their wives and the children own and step of the younger of the two. There are four more units of extended families with brothers. Of the five units of extended families with brothers, in one only no parent is living. In the remaining four the widowed mother is a member of the family. In one of them a sister who is a discarded wife forms an addition.

Of the 7 two generations extended units one is formed by man, his wife, his widowed mother and step-mother and his father's brother's son and his wife.

Of the 50 Devargaon families 14 are extended units. Of these in two units married brothers with their wives form the household. In four others there are parents and their married son without grand-children in the family so that the two former are parallel extensions and the latter four lineal extensions.

In six families there are three generations living together. In four of them the parents are forming a household with a married son, his wife and children with or without other unmarried children. In one of these four cases, the daughter-in-law does not live in the family, having discarded her husband. There are only two families in which the parents in each case live with two married sons and their children.

In the Mulund data there are only 5 families out of the 67 which are extended units. Of these not a single unit extends to three generations. One is composed of man, wife and his married sons. The other four cases are complex extensions both lineal and parallel. Three of them are so because they are composed of parents and their married sons of whom one figures as the head of the family. The remaining one is a real case of lineal and parallel extension though confined to two generations. A man and his wife live with their son and the daughter-in-law

and the man's brother, his wife, their son and the daughter-in-law form members of the household.

As observed above there are seven singleton units among the 77 households of Manik Ozar. The pattern of living presented by them is of more than passing interest. Of these two are women. Parabai (70), the brother's wife of Vithu, though she has no children and though Vithu's family is well off both in the number of children and in resources, lives separately in the same house cooking for herself. Vithu's another brother's wife Sitabai (60), who has two married daughters running their own households, forms a member of Vithu's household. There is Vithu's third brother's widow (65) who has a married son, and she lives in a separate house with him. During two prolonged and separate stays at Manik Ozar Dr. Chapekar did not discover any particularly quarrelsome or bickering propensities in the family. I must conclude that Parabai is a village specimen of individuality. That she is really so is attested by her volunteering Dr. Chapekar to help him in his mission of study of the people of the place. The other woman (60) is the mother of Sakha whose life experiences are narrated elsewhere. She has to live at Manik Ozar by herself managing the family land as her son Sakha has to work and live at Igatpuri. This is an evidently temporary arrangement.

Bala is the oldest of the five males that live by themselves, being sixty years of age. His case is of a particularly unsuccessful and poor old man. Paying an annual revenue of three rupees twelve annas, he gets from his land only 2 maunds of paddy, one of 'nagali', and 8 seers of wheat. Needless to say that he has very largely to depend on his labour and wages to keep his body and soul together. The irony of it is that Bala was twice-married. Both his wives left him. His second wife had borne him a daughter. That daughter, recently married, was evidently reared by her grand-father. It is a sheer case of poverty being shunned by everybody including close relatives. Bala's father's brother's son, Lakshman (40) runs a particularly well off household in the village. This is about the only instance of old persons being uncared for.

Lakshman (52), after his wife's death about seventeen years ago, did not remarry in the interest of his son Kushaba who is

now nineteen. Kushaba having passed the Vernacular Final is now a primary teacher far away and not yet married. Lakshman who pays a land revenue of Rs. 7-8-0 gets from his land a meagre return. It yields him only 5 maunds of paddy, one of 'nagali', 'vari', and one of pulses. He possesses no animals, and has to hire out his labour for eking out a subsistence. His son relieves his worries to some extent but earning as he does only forty rupees a month and having to maintain a teacher's standard, he cannot afford to do any better for his father.

Rama (30) was married when he was about sixteen and his parents were living. His wife having lived in his house for some years left him two or three years after she became mature. Rama has been living alone since her desertion three years ago. He has two brothers one of whom lives at his father-in-law's village and another works as a day-labourer at Kalyan. Rama's economic condition is much better than that of the other two singletons. He gets from his land 5 to 6 maunds of paddy, as much 'nagali', and about a maund of pulses. He possesses one cow and one calf.

Bhau (30) is one of Haraku's sons whose interesting and large household is already described. Bhau's wife died three years ago after a married life of about eight years. A daughter born to him by her had already died an infant. Bhau for the last two or three years goes from place to place with a sort of peripatetic tea-shop.

Bapu (70) is the most curious singleton of not only Manik Ozar but perhaps among the Mahadev Kolis. He was married. He had two daughters. Both of them were married. The younger is without any children, the elder did not live with her husband but wandered at will and though she was at Manik Ozar at the time of enquiry she was not living with her father. Bapu's wife had died some years back. He is the father's brother of Vithu whose well-to-do family is already described. Bapu has passed his land on to him. He works on the land and also looks after Vithu's children. But he is not prepared to live in the household of Vithu. For, Bapu has a constitutional objection to the slight disorderliness that prevails in a household with children.

We have seen that in most of the cases where a man has married more than one wife it is for children and particularly for a son. There is not much evidence for concubinage and prostitution in a village like Manik Ozar. Clandestine sexual relations, however, though not much talked about, would appear to be not uncommon. As already seen venereal diseases have been asserted to have a large incidence among the Mahadev Kolis. The way in which married women have been known to leave their husbands soon after puberty points in the same direction. From informal conversations Dr. Chapekar was convinced that sexual intercourse is begun by boys not very long after they are fourteen or fifteen. A Mahadev Koli woman appears to have much more independence of action and much larger margin of likes and dislikes than appears on the surface from her placid life. The way children of a woman whether by her former husband or sometimes even from an unknown lover are accepted is an indication that in spite of chastity and faithfulness being considered a virtue and respected, aberrations from such a norm are fairly well tolerated, provided money transactions are straightened up between the parties concerned. Dr. Chapekar could not detect any animosities prevailing on this score.

The young wife is so young in most cases that for a few years after marriage, as stated earlier, she lives with her parents and only occasionally lives with her husband's people. She is still looked upon as the maiden of the family and necessarily partakes in the semi-agricultural festival of Gauripujan on the Aksayya Tritiya day. The change in the status of a married woman from a newly-wed bride to a housewife is well brought out by the contrast of the rites she performs later as a housewife on that same day, namely, the Aksayya Tritiya day. When her husband performs on this day fairly elaborate rites for the manes, as a housewife she has to partake in them and offer worship to her deceased parents-in-law. The kinship terms that she has to use to designate or to address her husband's father and mother are not the standard affinal terms, 'sasra' and 'sasu', but ones to which she is already accustomed and which are charged with associations of tender emotion. They are 'mamoji' which would mean respected 'mama' or mother's brother, and 'ati' or 'ato' that is father's sister. She herself is called by her

personal name by elder male and female members of her husband's household. And it should be borne in mind that, unlike in high caste communities of Maharashtra, the personal name of a woman is not changed on marriage, so that she continues to be called by the name to which she is accustomed. Her husband's brothers, she knows, are related to her in the relationship of 'bhaya' for the elder and 'dir' for the younger brothers. The term 'bhaya' imports brother who is in the standard way named 'bhau' but is honorifically referred to as 'bhaurya' which may even be contracted to 'bhaya'. Though the husband's elder brother is to be addressed as 'bhavaji', the import of the term to the newly wedded wife is not much different from that conveyed by the expression 'honoured brother'. The 'dir' is addressed as 'dajiba' or 'babaji'.

In the songs that accompany the grinding of corn in the domestic hand-mill both these relatives are lovingly referred to. And their wives called 'jau' and in the honorific way 'jaubai' are appealed to for peace and harmony. And that too in a context where the brothers are said to be quarrelling over partition of their ancestral land. The sentiment expressed is that the women, that is the brother's wives, though strangers, being born in different families, behave towards each other much better than the quarrelling brothers. The reason is also stated that as the house would be shared by the brothers the children of the two men would be playing in the same yard though there may be division of agricultural land.

A husband's sister is 'vainji' both for address and designation. The word is not unlikely to be the same as standard 'vahini', which is pronounced as 'vaini', with the honorific suffix added to it which gives 'vainji'. This relative on her part, at least in the current song accompanying grinding, appeals to her brother's wife in an endearing manner glorifying *inter alia* her brother and the woman's husband. 'Vainji's' children are 'bhacha' if male and 'bhachi' if female, the same as they are to the woman's husband, but with this difference that she will indicate respectful tenderness by adding to their names suffixes like 'ba' and 'ji' while addressing the male and 'bai' while addressing the female.



A woman not only behaves very politely and not only speaks keeping a distance from her daughter's husband, who is designated in the Marathi way 'javai', but also bows down to him when he comes to her house or when he meets her elsewhere. This pattern of behaviour between a woman and her daughter's husband is a peculiarity which the Mahadev Kolis share with another Scheduled Tribe of this area, the Thakurs. With all this she might and she does address him as 'javai', the son-in-law. But the more common practice of addressing him, for both the mother-in-law and the father-in-law, is by adding the suffix 'ji' or 'ba', and softly modulating the suffix as well as the term 'javai' to which it is added.

The nearest analogy to the practice of a mother-in-law bowing down to her son-in-law is provided by the custom prevalent among the Halbas of Chhattisgad of a mother's brother showing the same respect in the same manner to his sister's son.<sup>6</sup> It must be noted in this connection that occasionally one's sister's son is addressed by a male in the same modulation and with the addition of the suffix 'ba' to the proper kinship term as 'bhachyaba'. A woman addresses her brother's son similarly.

A Mahadev Koli man calls his wife's mother 'mami', that is maternal uncle's wife, and his wife's father as 'mama', or maternal uncle. It is in keeping with this status and original relationship that though a son's wife's mother and a daughter's husband's mother are to a man and his wife 'vahini' in address—the denotative term being the standard Marathi 'vihin'—the latter, that is the daughter's mother-in-law, is addressed specifically as 'vainji'; and this is the term, as we have seen, which a married woman uses to address her husband's sister. Parallely a daughter's father-in-law is addressed as 'dada' just as a son's father-in-law is addressed. And 'dada' is a term of address by a man for his wife's elder brother, the denotative term being 'mehuna'. 'Mehuna' and 'mehuni' are terms which, like their equivalents in Telugu and Kannada, denote one's mother's brother's son and daughter respectively. One's father's sister's son and daughter are also 'mehuna' and 'mehuni' to one, the father's sister being 'mavalan'. A woman, too, calls her husband's sister's husband

6. Russell and Hiralal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, Vol. III, p. 189.

'dada', and denotes him by the term 'vyahi', 'in-law male relative'. A woman's sister's husband is also addressed by her as 'dada'.

A woman's brother's children are male 'bhacha' and female 'bhachi' as already stated. But her sister's children to her are 'mavas-lek' that is 'mavas-son' and 'mavas-daughter'.

This kinship terminology appears to fit in with cross-cousin marriage if it is widely distributed in the community. But if the term 'ati' or 'ato' which is used by a woman for her mother-in-law primarily denotes a father's sister and if we assume that kinship terminology is in entire harmony with the marriage system and *vice versa*, then in the Mahadev Koli community a girl's usual husband is her father's sister's son. An 'ati's' husband is 'mama', a woman calling her father-in-law, 'mama' or by the honorific form 'mamoji'. The practice is wholly in harmony with the typical marriage. A man, we have seen, calls his father-in-law 'mama' and his mother-in-law 'mami'. The terms harmonise with the practice of a male marrying his mother's brother's daughter. A male marrying his mother's brother's daughter means the same thing as a female, that is his wife, marrying her father's sister's son. This is one type of cross-cousin marriage.

In the other type of cross-cousin marriage the male marries his father's sister's daughter and the female, her mother's brother's son. In such a cross-cousin marriage a woman's mother-in-law would be her 'mama's' wife who is called 'mami' and not necessarily her father's sister and hence to be called 'ati'. If both types, however, are normally practised, a woman's father's sister also becomes her mother's brother's wife. And then the two relationships of 'ati' and 'mami' coalesce and we have the kinship terms so far dealt with harmonising with the marital pattern.

Relationship terms conforming to this pattern of marriage penetrate in terminology even further so as to ramify through it almost wholly. With this marital pattern two or more sisters would be marrying males who are related to one another as brothers. And we find in Mahadev Koli terminology that a man's wife's sister is neither called 'mehuni'—this is the standard Marathi term for the relative, which as we have seen is reserved

by a Mahadev Koli for his mother's brother's daughter, nor 'sali' which is the Hindi term for that relative. The latter term, as I have pointed out elsewhere<sup>7</sup> is quite clearly based on the Sanskrit term for wife's brother, 'syala', turned in vernacular into 'sala'. Instead, she is called 'sadin', that is the wife of 'sadu', a term which denotes in most Indian languages one's wife's sister's husband. What is particularly noteworthy is the fact that the Mahadev Kolis do not call this relative, one's wife's sister's husband, simply 'sadu' but as 'sadbhau', 'sad-brother', that is 'sadu who is a brother'. He is addressed as 'dada' if he is the husband of the elder sister of the wife. This departure is the more interesting as one's wife's brother is denoted by the standard Marathi term 'mehuna'. Similarly a man's sister's husband is designated as 'mehuna'. Both a male and a female call their elder sister's husband 'dada'.

This pattern inheres in the terminology of the first upper and the first lower generations. Thus not only is one's mother's sister's husband 'kaka'—custom of two sisters marrying males who are related to each other as brothers fits this terminology—but even one's wife's mother's brother is called by the same term 'kaka'. And, logically, one's wife's mother's brother's wife, that is the above-mentioned relative's wife, is called 'mavashi', mother's sister. And still further logically just as one's wife's mother is called 'mami', so too is one's wife's mother's sister. In the lower generation one's sister's son's wife is looked upon as daughter though not actually called so. Similarly one's sister's daughter's husband is looked upon as one's son. And both these relatives are addressed by their personal names, though their precise relationship is described in the appropriate terms, 'bhache-sun' and 'bhache-javai'. The marital arrangement of cross-cousins, through and through involving exchange of daughters, with which the kinship terminology of the Mahadev Kolis fits in, is feasible with classificatory terminology of kinship, wherein excepting for few lineal relatives, all collateral and parallel relatives, are given classificatory and not individual and denotative terms. The kind of social organisation such kinship terminology and marriage pattern conform to, is what is known as

7. G. S. Ghurye, *Family and Kin in Indo-European Culture*, 2nd ed., 1962.

the dual organisation whereby a community is divided into two exogamous moieties, the members of one taking their mates from the other.

There is one more feature of the kinship terminology current among the Mahadev Kolis which deserves special notice. Father's father is 'aja' and mother's father, too, is 'aja' as in standard Marathi terminology. Similarly an 'aja's' father is 'panaja'. Whereas an 'aja' is addressed as 'ajo' or 'ajoba', his father, if there is one living, is addressed as 'baba', father and his wife as 'ai', mother. Another feature which is not discovered in the terminology of the upper generations but is specifically found in that of the lower ones is even more interesting. One's grandson's son is, as in standard Marathi terminology, 'panatu'. But his son—relative in the fourth lower generation—is not 'nipanatu',<sup>8</sup> as in the standard Marathi terminology but is 'ritvand', that is one at the sight of whose face the person to whom he stands in that relation goes with empty mouth. The meaning is that the man who sees the face of his fourth descendant sees one who will not offer him funeral oblations and hence he will have to depart with empty mouth. The fourth descendant 'ritvand' is, like the fifth in the standard Marathi terminology, an unlucky sight and for identical reason.

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8. Ibid., pp. 30-31.

## FASTS, FESTIVALS AND RECREATION

THE Mahadev Kolis observe almost all the current festivals of Maharashtra. They also observe some of the fasts. In addition, they have two special festivals of their own. One is what is called Vagh-baras celebrated in honour of the tiger whose worship suggests an ethnic link with the local Scheduled Tribes like the Thakurs and Varlis and those further east and north like the Bhils and the Korkus.<sup>1</sup> The other is the Bakaresat, 'the goat's sixth'.

The Vagh-baras, the tiger's twelfth, is observed on the twelfth of the lunar month of Kartik both in the bright and in the dark halves. The observance of this festival seems to differ not exactly from place to place but at least from region to region. At Jawhar-Jamsar its observance was not actually reported but I have no doubt that it is observed there more or less in the same form as at Manik Ozar. It is in the Devargaon area that the chief difference in the manner of observance is noticed and attested.

In the Manik Ozar area the principal and active participants are the cowherds. They go round the village a day previous to the festival day and collect uncooked food material. Fairly early in the morning on the festival day, with the material collected they go outside the village and selecting a secluded spot in the jungle settle down. They begin to prepare 'khir' out of the material brought which is generally rice or wheat. While the 'khir' is cooking, some of them draw a sort of a picture of a tiger on a stone with red lead. When the 'khir' is ready, the cowherds divide themselves into two groups, one being called the tigers and the other the guards. The 'tigers' try to rob the 'khir' and the guards in protecting it splash it with something on the 'tigers' which scalds their backs. After the

1. Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, pp. 143, 357; S. S. Ul Hassan, op. cit., p. 74.

scalding, all feast on the 'khir'. At the next Vagh-baras, that is on the twelfth of the dark half, the same programme is repeated, dried fish taking the place of 'khir' as the object of protection and the food of the feast.

At Devargaon the programme is different. What they gather from the people of the village is not only wheat and rice but also pulses and pumpkin. These things are cooked for them by unmarried girls of the village. In the jungle a number of boys and men gather together not only from the village but even from the neighbourhood. There, under some 'sid'<sup>2</sup> tree they prepare a spot. The cooked food is brought on the head of a boy who wears flowers in his cap. With his burden, the boy circumambulates the 'sid' tree five times and putting his burden down runs for the nearby stream or other sheet of water. The assembled people pelt him with pieces of the rind of the pumpkin. When he reaches water, all of them feast on the food.

The other special festival, the Bakaresat or the 'goat's sixth', is observed on the sixth of the bright half of the lunar month of Paus. People who keep idols get together their consanguines and collect contribution from them, of both cash and rice, the initiative being taken by those families in which there is a tradition of this festival. On the day of the festival in the evening they cut the goat and place its head and feet as an offering before the deity. Afterwards the whole kill is cooked and a meal is prepared. Invitations are issued beforehand. When all the invitees are assembled—and quite often they number about one hundred—the feast is served. That ends the Bakaresat.

This festival is a sort of a complement in Manik Ozar area of the festival of 'vangesat' which takes place exactly one lunar month before, that is, on the sixth of the bright half of the lunar month of Margashirsh. It is the festival known as the Champashashti among high-caste Maharashtrians and like it, it is observed only in those households in which it is traditional to do so. As among other Maharashtra castes, it is the day on which brinjals which are eschewed during the holy four months are

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2. *Bauhinia racemosa*. It is also known as 'apta'.

begun to be eaten. In Jawhar-Jamsar area a goat is killed on this day in some families.

Of the fasts proper, those that are observed by many or at least by some are: (1) Vatasavitri, on the full moon day of Jeshtha observed only by married females, (2) the bright eleventh of Ashadh (Ashadhi Ekadasi), (3) all the Mondays in Shravan—they are as among other people only half-day fasts—(4) Rishipanchami, the bright fifth of Bhadrapad, observed by elderly women, (5) Kartiki Ekadasi or the bright eleventh of Kartik and (6) Shivaratra or the dark fourteenth of Magh.

The Maharashtra New Year, the first of Chaitra, is celebrated in the standard manner, more so, strange to say, at Manik Ozar than at Jawhar-Jamsar where the influence of the royal family leads one to expect greater approximation to the Maratha standards. Ninth of the month is the well-known Rama's ninth, the birth-day of Ram. It is celebrated only sporadically, and is observed as a half-day fast by those few who are 'malakaris'. But where it is celebrated, as at Kelungan, where in the temple of Hanuman, the monkey-god, there are idols of Rama, 'bhajan' singing begins the previous night and continues uninterrupted till the dawn of the tenth. At midday on the tenth there is a common dinner organised by the village. At Jawhar there is a regular temple of Rama. In most other and interior localities this festival is not in evidence. It is otherwise with Hanuman-jayanti, the bright fifteenth of the same month. Almost every Mahadev Koli village has a temple of the monkey-god and in each, in the early dawn, 'bhajan' singing takes place and at sunrise somebody offers worship to the deity.

In Jawhar-Jamsar area villagers go outside the village and cook in the open on every Tuesday in Chaitra. Each household cooks separately and eats food after making an offering to the Goddess. On the last Tuesday of the month they take out a procession which terminates outside the village boundary. This means that all disease is exiled from the village.

In the next lunar month, Vaishakh, there is only one festival, that of Akhati or Akhedi or Akshayya tritiya, the imperishable third, as its standard designation goes. It comes on the bright third and is a composite festival with complex significance. The Mahadev Kolis believe that the manes visit the

houses of their descendants on the first day of the dark half of Phalgun, that is the day following the lighting of the Holi. They return on this day. In order to facilitate their return to heaven, on the two sides of the front door a small staircase with few steps built up of cowdung is rested against the wall, one on each side. If the staircase and steps are not made of cowdung then five marks with turmeric or sandal-paste are made, literally one above the other, which again are symbolic of the steps. Those whose father and mother are dead bring two fresh earthenware pots of two kinds, one called 'kara' and the other 'keli'. They fill the pots with water and put some rice in them, and worship them. In this worship the wife has to join the husband. If the mother is living then only one pot, the 'kara', for the father, is brought and worshipped but if the mother is dead and father living then only 'keli' is brought and worshipped. The worship of these particular pots is not universally observed though the staircase is either prepared or represented by all. The standard sweet of this day is 'puranpoli'.

It is not clear from information received as to how this visit of the manes for about a month and a half fits in with the observance of the fortnight sacred to the manes coming in the latter part of Bhadrapad as amongst other Maharashtrian castes. The Mahadev Kolis call the period 'pitar-pat'. It is known that they observe it in almost the same manner as any of the non-Brahmin castes of the region. The variation is important to note. The following observance which is current both in the Konkan and above the Ghats is a speciality of these people. Before taking a meal on the day of the observance, described in the chapter on Birth and Death, a live charcoal is placed outside the front door on one side. The performer of the ceremony then proceeds from inside the house to the place where the live charcoal is placed, dropping on the way rice corn with one hand and melted ghee through a hole made in a piece of an unleavened bread with the other. There he drops a few rice corns and a little melted ghee through the piece of bread on the charcoal itself, and keeping the charcoal on the bread leaves it at some place, from where it may be taken away by a crow or eaten by a mouse. In a well-to-do family, on the day of observance, vigil



is kept throughout the night with the help of 'tamasha', 'bha-jan' or such other entertainment.

On the last day of this fortnight it is necessary for all to fast till the midday meal, which on that day must be taken before noon, and also for the rest of the day. At the midday meal a crow has to be fed. The Mahadev Kolis believe that if all this is not done before noon, as the doors of heaven are closed early on that day, the manes would be stranded.

In the Konkan, the observance of this day is much different and preparations have to begin a week before it. Fresh earthenware pots of the Desh rites are nowhere in evidence nor are stairs prepared. As a matter of fact the rites do not give any idea of the festival having any connection with the manes-worship. It appears to be a delayed observance of the festival called 'Chaitra-Gauri', which is not observed with as much paraphernalia in Maharashtra as in North India, combined with some festival of a preponderantly agricultural import. About seven days, before Akshayya tritiya, six kinds of corn, namely, paddy, 'nagali', 'vari', 'jowar', wheat and maize are sown in a small basket filled with light soil and manure and kept in the house under another basket. Everyday it is watered a bit and again closed under the basket. From the first day of the sowing till the night previous to the festival day, women sing some songs at night which are known as Gauri songs. Both the basket in which the corn is sown and the shoots of the corn, which are naturally yellowish in colour, are called Gauri. As at the Navaratra festival, the corn shoots are called 'dhan'. On the Akshayya tritiya day the basket, in which the corn shoots have by now grown fairly to a height of about four inches, is carried on their heads by newly-wed girls who have returned to their parents for this rite. They gather together either at the house of the Patil or at the village temple. Singing the same songs there, they again lift the basket and proceed to the accompaniment of those songs to a nearby stream, lake or well, and taking out good many bunches from the basket, throw the basket with its contents into the water. The shoots taken out are distributed among newly-weds and small boys, all of whom sport them either on the head or over the ears. The height to which the shoots grow and their size are considered to give an indication of the

quality of the seeds which are to be later used for the crops of the year.

Krishna's eighth (eighth of the dark of Shravan) and Ganesa's fourth (fourth of the bright half of Bhadrapad) are being observed here and there, particularly in places where the Mahadev Kolis have come in contact with, or under the influence of, the high castes. However, this is not to be taken to mean utter absence of some form of belief about Ganapati far back in the history. Panchnadi is a place far in the interior, and there, Dr. Chapekar was informed, Ganapati is publicly installed and subscriptions collected from the people for the festival. It is interesting to note that the festival continues as in Poona or Bombay till the fourteenth of the month, the day known as Ananta Chaturdasi. An interesting variation in the common belief about this day, Ganesa Chaturthi, is that the day is to be observed as an off day, the belief being that working on the day angers rats and mice, the vehicle of Ganapati according to Hindu mythology and the Mahadev Kolis, and that when angered they eat away or destroy the crops. No Brahmin priest is necessary for the worship.

The last day of Shravan is the Pola day and a gala festival for the agricultural communities at least of the Desh part of Maharashtra. The Mahadev Kolis are no exception. It is a cattle festival and a day of complete rest for all. The celebration consists in a procession in the evening of decorated bullocks from outside the village to its principal temple. One item of the decoration which is a must may be mentioned. That is a whisk made out of a root of a convenient tree to be tied to each horn of the animal. After the animals are brought to the temple they are made to circumambulate the temple five times in a procession. All the while, during the procession from the village boundary to its place of dispersal, the musical band of the village plays and the 'lezim'-players give their performance. Early in the morning the local Mahar leader, a dignitary for the occasion, ties up a 'toran', an arch of mango leaves, fairly high at the village boundary and in the evening, stationing himself there, he goes on pronouncing a benediction in the terms 'chang bhale', meaning 'very very good', as the bullocks pass under the 'toran'. Each owner worships his bullocks when he takes them home.

At the worship he offers, 'maka' leaves, 'harali' shoots and flowers at the feet of the bullocks. Members of the household, men, women and children, then make obeisance to each bullock. Each bullock is fed with at least one 'puranpoli'. At every house the potter delivers five small earthenware bullocks in the morning. It is a great competitive fun for the children of the household to decorate the pottery animals and to keep them ready for being worshipped along with the bullocks of the family. A family meal of 'puranpoli' concludes this agricultural festival.

Formerly, this festival used to be an occasion not only for bickering but even for serious conflict on the score of precedence of bullocks in the procession. Now-a-days a sort of an agreed scheme of procedure seems to prevail. In the event of there being a cattle disease in the village or its vicinity the festival is dropped. Such having been the case at Manik Ozar in 1955, the festival was not celebrated there in that year.

The next important festival is that of Navaratra, 'the nine nights'. It is an important one and is observed in more or less the same manner as in other communities of Maharashtra. Among the Mahadev Kolis, too, the nine nights observances are followed only in households which have the family idols. Owing to this practice, the festival tends to be a collective one if not actively co-operative for lineages. Households bearing the same name not only in the same village but even in the vicinity look up to the particular household in which the family idols are kept as the centre of this festivity, and contribute their mite if possible, and almost invariably go there to participate in the celebrations. The collective nature of this festival has tended to turn it into a sort of a common and public village festival like what Ganesa Chaturthi is in big villages and towns. In a number of Mahadev Koli villages, the celebration of this nine nights' or rather ten days' festival takes place in the local Maruti temple with the contribution of all the villagers.

One peculiarity of the observance of this festival among the Mahadev Kolis is that though the person who is to do the actual worship from day-to-day during the festival has to fast during the whole of the period, it is broken into two almost equal parts. On the fifth day from the start, in the evening, the worshipper breaks his fast by taking a vegetarian meal and then

starts the fast again, which is broken only in the afternoon on the tenth with a meal which is non-vegetarian, the meat of the sacrificed animal being an item in the menu.

The fifth day is specifically called Phulavara, 'flowering', for unknown reason. The special feature of observance on this day is also called by the same name 'phulavara'. It is a string of flowers like the other ones which are daily hung over the object of worship—it is from this offering of a garland every day that this festival in popular parlance is referred to as simply 'malas' garlands in some parts of Maharashtra—with the addition of a copra-half and five small unleavened breads of rice flour specifically called 'chanaki'. It must be noted that this feature of the festivity is met with among the Scheduled Tribe of the Thakurs but not among high castes of Maharashtra. The 'phulavara' is performed in the evening. At that time five small lamps of rice dough—they have to be, like 'chanaki' of the flour of the new corn—are made. Prayers known as 'arati' in Marathi are offered to the goddess Durga, at which these lamps are waved before the deity installed for the occasion. Thereafter similar prayers are offered to Khandoba and Bahiroba. For accompaniment no musical instrument is used; only hands are clapped to keep time. For this 'phulavara' rite, women and children of connected families gather together and keep on throughout the performance.

Another variation from the standard Maharashtrian observance of this festival is that the corn-shoots which are grown during this festival in all households where it is observed—among other Maharashtrian castes they are grown only at this festival—are distributed along with the conventional 'gold' (leaves of 'sid' tree which symbolise gold on this day) and bits of the 'chanaki' and copra of the 'phulavara' to all and not only to females as in other Maharashtrian castes on the tenth day. The shoots are also further used as worshipping material to be offered to the arms and weapons, sword, spear or gun, on the tenth day.

Girls form Bhondai parties and move from house to house in the neighbourhood singing to the accompaniment of 'tipari' sticks. At every house they get a handful of grain, the collected

grain being cooked and eaten, and sometimes distributed to the women of the village, on the last, that is the tenth day.

On the tenth day, which is known as the Dasara, the arms are placed before the installed deity, if they are not already placed there on the first day, and offered full-fledged worship. The principal worshipper places the pot and the cocoanut, that were installed as deity, in a brass dish and then the rite of 'tali bharane', with the pronouncement of Yelkot, follows in the same manner as described in the chapter on 'Marriage and Family.' Thereafter, all the paraphernalia is relegated to a stream.

In the afternoon, sacrifice either of a goat or of a cock is offered and the meat is cooked for the dinner. In the evening, after the sacrifice but before the meal, the usual characteristic feature of Dasara, namely exchange of the leaves of 'sid', symbolic of gold, takes place. For fetching leaves the people must cross the village boundary.

Formerly, the sacrifice offered was that of a buffalo. The specific manner of sacrificing it was for the principal person to make the first stroke on the nozzle and the second in command to make the second stroke on the hips. The animal was led to the sacrificial spot in a procession. Buffalo sacrifice was an occasion for bickerings and quarrels on the score of social precedence of individuals as privileged dignitaries. Discouragement, therefore, of the sacrifice by the State and the tiredness of the people are partially responsible for the disuse of the sacrifice, the main cause being an accession of the humanitarian spirit as the consequence of anti-animal-sacrifice propaganda.

The Divali of the Mahadev Kolis may be said to begin on the twelfth of the dark half of Ashvin, that is a day or two before anywhere it begins among the higher castes. The observance on that day stresses the significance of the festival being one connected with cattle and their safety. The cowherds of the village gather together and prepare from the sacred grass of 'mol' a goodly figure of a hooded cobra with the tail-end properly coiled into shape and strong enough to hold a pottery lamp called 'panati'. This contraption is called 'divali'. Taking it with them they go from house to house, singing a song which is specific and refers to a hooded cobra and its exploits.

and ask for oil for their lamp, which keeps burning all the while. They wave the 'divali' before the cattle of the house whereafter the housewife gives them oil. After they have completed the round of all the houses in the village they retire to the temple. There, they put the 'panati' lamp in a corner and throw the grass cobra on the roof of the temple, keep the surplus oil for the temple lamp, and go home. They repeat this programme every evening, the last being that of the first of Kartik. On these four successive evenings, a fresh hooded cobra figure is made of 'mol' with one additional hood added every evening so that the figure of the cobra on the first of Kartik has five hoods.

Lamps are lighted in general and in great numbers only on the first of Kartik. On this day the sweet dish consists of 'puranpoli'. The local Mahar moves round in the village crying aloud in front of every house a benediction and receives a handful of grain at every house. The benediction takes the curious form of 'Ida pida talo, Baliche rajya yevo,' 'May all evil depart and Bali's reign return'. It should be noted that this day is recorded in the almanacs and is accordingly known as Balipratipada or 'Bali's first'. It is believed that this is the one day on which the demon king Bali is permitted to rule over the earth. But the benediction pronounced by the Mahar in the Mahadev Koli region goes much further than bringing back Bali's rule for one day only.

It is on this day that the Bhaubij festival of Maharashtra is celebrated by the Mahadev Kolis. The sister goes to her brother, presents him with a silk waist-cord and a copra-half and the brother in return gives her a few annas.

In Jawhar-Jamsar area the observance of this festival conforms more to that of the other Maharashtrian castes. There is no 'divali' made nor any other observance in vogue before the fourteenth of the dark half of Kartik, which is celebrated in the same manner as among other Maharashtrian castes. Also, lamps are lighted from this day on. There is no benediction of the Mahar on the first of Kartik. On the contrary, in the front yard of the house almost every household prepares a small human figure of cowdung to represent the demon king Bali; and after offering worship to it, it is trampled over. On the

morning of this day the cattle of the household are decorated and driven over a small fire kindled in front of the house.

The Brother's second is observed on the second of Kartik in the same way as is current above the Ghats. The additional feature is that the brother and sister feed each other with a little sugar.

The only other variation pertains to Lakshmi-pujan or the worship of the goddess of wealth. On the day given in the almanac, usually the last day of Ashvin, they worship their cattle which is their wealth and not account books as among trading castes.

After Diwali there are two festivals, namely Vaghbaras and Champashashti-Bakaresat, which have been already described, their observance being peculiar to the Mahadev Kolis.

Then follows the solar festival of Sankrant-Kinkrant. It falls generally on the thirteenth of January. The Mahadev Koli observance of it is only slightly different from that current in Maharashtra. Yet this is the one festival of which a Brahmin priest must give intimation beforehand. This he does by visiting every house and stating the day of the Sankrant. In return every housewife pours out to him corn measuring out with spread out palms joined together, 'pasabhar' as it is known in Marathi. On the day of the Sankrant, in the morning all Koli males go to the village temple carrying with them sesamum mixed with jaggery, few pieces of peeled sugar-cane, some fresh green gram and green peas and a few pieces of carrot mixed together. After making an offering of this mixture to the deity, every one gives just a little of it to every one else and to the accompaniment of the standard Marathi formula, which means 'take this sesamum and jaggery and talk sweet', embraces one another. The women on their part—whether they are first-married, second-married, or living with their husbands without any formal marriage ceremony, and those even who do not live with their husbands—receive in the morning from the village potter five new earthenware pots generally called 'madake' but specifically for this festival known as 'khan', delivered at home. Generally in Maharashtra the particular pot connected with this festival is called 'sugad' and has a specific shape. But among Mahadev Kolis that term denotes an earthenware pot used for

cooking rice. The potter never fails in this service because it is very profitable to him. He receives one potful of corn for three of these pots. The pots are worshipped by the housewife and then kept in the house. The midday meal on this day has 'puranpoli' as its sweet dish.

In Jawhar-Jamsar area, as among other Maharashtrians, some of the housewives at least organise at their homes a 'loot' of some such article as banana or sugar-cane, by women whose husbands are living. The next day, the Kinkranti day, is observed in a special manner. First of all a sweet dish called 'dhirade' has to be prepared. 'Dhirade' is a preparation, like Marathi 'ghavan', of rice-flour with the only difference that the flour is sweetened with jaggery. The evening meal of the day is expected to include some meat dish. All Mahadev Koli males in this area must and do play the game called 'lagori' which is favourite with school children of Maharashtra.

Mahibij appears to be an agricultural festival much more magnified and acculturated among the Mahadev Kolis. In the standard almanac there is nothing special recorded for this day which is the second day of the bright half of Magh. Among agricultural classes, on this day, people take their meal only after seeing the new moon and offering food to it. It is not known, however, that the agricultural classes call this day, Dharmarajachi Bij, 'the second of Dharmaraj'. But the Mahadev Kolis know it by this name and further add the information which establishes some connection between them and the well-known Nath sect of Maharashtra. They say that it is the anniversary day of one of the nine great Naths of that sect.

In the evening before it is time to take meals, five balls of cooked wheat flour are shaped into the form of lamps called 'arati', a lamp with a protruding tongue for a wick. These five objects, though called 'arati', are treated as 'devs' or godlings after they are lighted. Of these, one is bigger than the rest in the practice current above the Ghats. They are placed on a piece of cloth so that the four small ones lie in front of the big one. This arrangement, however, does not seem to be universal, for it is not current in Jawhar-Jamsar area. A special dish has to be offered at least above the Ghats to these godlings. It is called 'unda'. It is a fairly elaborate piece of confection.



First of all, 'ghavans' of rice have to be prepared, some pieces of which have to go into the formation of the final dish. The 'unda' proper is rice-flour sweetened with jaggery, shaped into a ball and steamed. The 'unda' that is to be offered to the godlings of Mahibij has in it, besides a few pieces of 'ghavan', some gram, wetted and dehusked, and some copra gratings. Afterwards the 'undas' are distributed to the gathering and even to neighbours. While doing this, the distributor goes on saying "Dharmalcha Phurmal" .

I am sorry to say that the saying does not convey any meaning and Dr. Chapekar's repeated and persistent effort to get some explanation of it bore no fruit. May it be that it enshrines some sad experience of the Mahadev Kolis about some Marwadi 'savkar'?

The godlings are kept whole night and it is seen that they keep on burning. The next morning these godings are cut up and eaten by the members of the family. This is the other occasion when the representation of a deity is eaten. One is already described in the chapter on Birth and Death.

This festival, like that of Navaratra, is a great occasion for the gathering of lineages.

In Jawhar-Jamsar area the dish offered to the moon is technically called 'kaul' and is different from the one described above. Cooked rice, breads baked out of sweetened rice-flour, gram pulse, some onion, some chillies, some coriander, some small pieces of carrot and of banana are mixed together in ghee and balls are made out of them. It is these balls that are called 'kaul'. Another departure from the Ghat practice stresses the co-operative nature of this festival, thus making it more similar to that of Navaratra. Of the things that go in the making of 'kaul', cooked rice and sweetened bread are brought by everyone who gathers for the festival, and the other articles which are collectively known as 'malava' are provided by the householder at whose house the gathering takes place. Further, the godlings of the foregoing narration, that is, the lighted lamps, are waved to the moon and disposed of, there and then. All persons gathered there, each one taking his share of the sacred food, departs for home.

The fat for the lamps, has to be of cow's ghee produced in the household.

The next important festival which is also the greatest occasion for varied recreation, generally associated with important festivals in the Mahadev Koli region, is the Holi or the Shimga as it is popularly called. It begins on the first of Phalgun and continues upto the fifth of the dark half of that month, that is, for about twenty days. During this period games, particularly out-door ones, are played by men and women, mostly separately. At least one of the sports, namely, playing with tipri—a sport which combines music and dance in which time is kept by small wooden sticks beaten one over the other or and over that of another companion—used to be indulged in formerly by both the sexes together. Of late, even this sport is almost regularly indulged in separately. There is no tradition of any other game or sport having been a mixed one.

The formal Holi Fire is made on the full moon day. An informal fire called 'kokat holi'<sup>3</sup> is lighted by boys a day earlier without any ceremony above the Ghats; but in Jawhar-Jamsar area, it is lighted on the first day of the month. Holi Fire is not lighted at every house but is an affair of a locality. At Manik Ozar it is mostly community-wise, as generally it is in Maharashtra, all the Mahadev Kolis of the village lighting one common Holi. The spot on which it is made is fixed.

For the formal Holi Fire of the fifteenth, firewood is contributed by individuals and also brought from the jungle by youths in the locality. At the spot, after cleaning it, a shallow pit is dug up and in it are put a pice, a betel leaf and an areca-nut deep down and over them at the centre is put up a pole. This pole is of some dry wood above the Ghats but of bamboo in Jawhar-Jamsar area. In both areas by the side of the pole similarly imbedded in the surrounding wood, cow-dung cakes and hay, the composite fuel placed in the pit, stands a fresh branch of the glomerous fig, 'umbar' or rarely of 'vohala'.

At the top of this branch or, as in Jawhar-Jamsar area, at the top of the bamboo pole, are tied in strings the offerings

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3. The significance of this term has eluded all enquiry and remains an enigma to me.

brought by individual householders. In addition to copra-halves which are common in both the areas there are specific breads which compose these offerings, and which are of different description in the two areas. Above the Ghats the breads are of rice-flour about four inches in diameter, and in Jawhar-Jamsar they are the standard 'puranpolis'. At Jawhar one cock used to be tied up at the top of the bamboo pole. It was the offering of the royal household. A good gunner from the State Police was expected to kill it at the first shot. The Holi is now invariably lighted by the Patil. Everywhere the fire for lighting has to be brought from the fire of the Holi of the Mahars of the village. Above the Ghats this bringing of the fire by a Mahadev Koli used to be and mildly still is an occasion for pelting the fire-carrier by the Mahars with live charcoal. This expression of hostility over, the Mahars immediately put themselves on good behaviour, and as rightful claimants—those entitled to this right—present themselves at the Mahadev Koli Holi in most of the areas, excepting quite definitely in the Nimgiri one, to collect the food offered by the Koli householders to their Holi.

The Patil after having lighted the Holi Fire sees if all the Koli householders of the village have arrived with their food-offering. Formerly these food offerings used to be brought to the spot in procession accompanied by the musical band. On being satisfied that it is so, he and others proceed singly or in file to circumambulate the Holi Fire five times, with the food-offering in one hand and continuous dropping of water with the other. At the completion of the fifth round, the food is placed down and either whole cocoanuts, as in Jawhar-Jamsar, or copra-halves, as above the Ghats, are thrown in the Holi Fire. There are always ready at hand half-a-dozen braves who with a long bamboo pole manage to take out a goodly number of these articles from that blazing fire before they are badly damaged.

By this time the green branch and the pole both topple down. In some areas the direction in which the branch topples down is interpreted as an indication of good or bad season to come. The breads and the copra that were tied to the top are now removed and with the addition of some copra taken out from the Holi Fire and some jaggery the whole mixture is distributed to the gathering as 'prasad'. Thereafter people go

home and take their metls. The food-offering of the Holi Fire is collected by the Mahars and taken away except in Nimgiri area. There it is collected by the Kolis themselves and kept near the Holi Fire under a basket. Next morning it is distributed as 'prasad'.

After meals the males return to the Holi and the females gather together at some convenient place in the village. The whole night is spent in games, sport and general merriment.

Next morning, after the children have romped about the Holi Fire for an hour or two, the males get up and with the help of boys direct many of the water-carrying females to the Holi-spot to pour their water round and into the Holi Fire to quench the embers thoroughly. For doing this, the women have to go in a procession, circumambulating the fire pit (Pl. 12). After the women have departed—and before departure their spirits too are so enlivened that they throw water at many a male before doing so—the males start throwing the wet ash mud at one another. This activity is known as 'dhulvad'. On this day an affine is invited for lunch in the name of the manes. He fasts in the morning and breaks it with this lunch. If an affine is not fed on this day, he has to be fed a fortnight later, on the New Year day. In Jawhar-Jamsar area the next day is known as 'shenvad', the third as 'panvad' and the fourth as 'chikhalvad'. The fifth day after the lighting of the Holi Fire is, as every where, known as Rangapanchami, 'the colour-fifth'.

From the first day, after the quenching of the Holi embers start the rounds of what are called 'songs' or masked characters in the village and in the neighbourhood with boys and girls accompanying them, or independently moving, to ask for and collect from individual households grain, particularly gram. Also from that day starts the itinerary of 'tamasha' troupes composed of Mahadev Kolis but not necessarily excluding members of other castes. The 'songs', the groups of boys or girls or a 'tamasha' troupe when visiting a nearby village first, on arrival, reach the Holi spot of the village. They make their obeisance there. Some of the local people, girls, boys or elders receive from the visitors a copra-half. Only after this gift can a visitor proceed into the village and give performance for which some grain or, in the case of 'tamasha', some cash-present is given. Two

of the most favourite 'songs' are of a country horseman and of a policeman. The latter, which more than anything else represents the long arm of the law, and thus if properly executed even excites a little fear, is presented by girls. The former in all its crudity illustrated in Pl. 13 is common among the neighbouring tribe of the Thakurs. A third 'song' almost as popular as the two just described is that of 'dasi', a female goblin, another source of fear round the year, which, it appears to me, is being laid to rest through this 'song' on the principle of homeopathic cagic. This role is presented by boys.

All this merriment has to come to an end on the fifth day, the Rangapanchami, and is brought to it with splashing of coloured water on one another and the distribution of 'prasad' consisting of the cooked grain earned by village troupers, boys and girls during the festival. The cooked grain is called 'ghugrya' in the usual manner.

Of the many sports and games played during this festival I must describe at least one, which from the limited material available on the subject, appears to me to be a speciality of the Mahadev Kolis. That is the sport of 'kakada'. It is so called from the article that is to be concealed by one party and to be detected by the other. In actuality the article is known elsewhere in Maharashtra as either 'toba', or 'sota'. Adult males are equally divided into two parties, each having its own leader. A wooden post is set up at a convenient spot. About fifty feet away from it keeping it on their side, the two parties stand facing each other. Decision having been arrived at in the usual manner as to which of the two parties should begin the game, a square piece of cloth is twisted into what the Kolis call 'kakada', and is given into the hands of the leader of the party that is to begin. All his men immediately take their hands behind their backs, and keep them fiddling. Their leader from behind his back passes on the 'kakada' to his neighbour, the latter and others doing the same, until their leader announces 'ready' and asks the other party leader to name the person in whose hands the 'kakada' is resting. If he does it correctly he has detected the 'kakada' and won a point which entitles him or his nominee from his party to begin the scoring. The score consists in taking a jump from the line where the first men of the

two parties stand towards the pole. The actual spot where the jumper lands is marked. If the detection fails, the performers, the first party, scores a win and a title to have the first jump. Again the same procedure is followed; and the winner jumps from the point, if any, his party has already reached. The game continues until one of the parties reaches the pole. The party thus reaching the pole is declared to have won the game.

'Tamasha' seems to be a very popular recreational activity with the Mahadev Kolis, being common in all the regions where they live. Usually, a tamasha-party consists of about seven persons, the minimum number considered necessary being five. In a troupe of five members, there is one dancer, one drummer, a comedian and two others keeping tune, one with a string instrument called 'tuntune' and the other with a pair of small cymbals. In a bigger party there may be an additional dancer and a drummer and some actors. Sometimes a tambourine-player is also included.

The dancer is generally a boy, dressed as a girl. The Mahadev Kolis think it improper that their women-folk should dance in a 'tamasha'. There are no female professional dancers in this community. They even disapprove of a professional female dancer being employed in their 'tamasha' troupe. However, they have come to realise that engaging a female dancer pays and some of them, specially those who give performances outside their region, do occasionally employ a female dancer, belonging to a caste other than their own.

Members of a 'tamasha' party are usually recruited from one village generally from among the community. Thus a party is naturally possessed of local and community pride. Reciprocally, the community and the locality are also proud of the troupe. It is only when an outsider is a person of exceptional merit that he finds his way in an alien troupe. When a troupe is unable to find a suitable person, then too, it has to search for an outsider from amongst the neighbouring villages or communities.

Observation and imitation together, which do not respect any communal limitation, are the elementary and common ways in which different arts are picked up by young aspirants. Education is also imparted by a father to a son thus developing a

family tradition. Near relatives also profit by this method, getting their first lessons from the elders in the larger family. Favourable propensities, which incline a youth to take to this activity, are of course important. Without these, even children from well-known families do not succeed. Advanced training is available from the institution of the Guru, which the Kolis call 'guru-breed'. This method of imparting knowledge through teacher-pupil tradition is found all over Maharashtra and is non-communal in character. There is a special initiation ceremony, where the disciple has to solemnly affirm his allegiance to his teacher in the presence of sacred fire and of a distinguished gathering. Govind Sabale, the well-known artist of Nimgiri in north-west corner of Poona district, had thus formally entered into the discipleship of a Mahar, Haribhau Vadgaonkar. Artists belonging to the same school or 'guru-breed' are expected to provide new songs to juniors and to help one another in a general way.

There are two schools of this teacher-disciple tradition, one called Kalagi and the other Tura. The Kalagi school believes in the element of Maya dominating human life. The dominance of Maya (illusion) over Brahma (reality) is the constant theme of the songs of this school. On the other hand, the Tura school praises in its songs, Brahma, the element of reality and condemns Maya. When parties belonging to different schools present themselves before the same audience their performances become intelligent, interesting and lively, as there is a regular contest between them. 'Tamasha' parties, therefore, have to equip themselves with a large stock of songs with convincing arguments and a direct appeal to the audience in order to succeed against rival troupes on occasions of contest.

Although there is no rule regarding the proper season for the 'tamasha' performance, need of proper accommodation limits the season to the dry months of the year. Being a very popular type of recreation in rural Maharashtra, a well-known 'tamasha' troupe invariably attracts a large audience. Such an audience can be accommodated only in the open and the performance is usually an alfresco entertainment. 'Chavadi', the public village pavilion, is used for an occasional indoor performance during the rainy season on special occasions if called upon to do so

by patrons. Both the probable patrons and the performers, being agriculturists in the main, are not free during the rainy season. 'Tamasha' performance in that season, therefore, is a rarity.

It is considered proper to invite a 'tamasha' party at such social functions, as the naming ceremony of a child, a marriage ceremony and the obsequies. 'Naral dene', to give cocoanut, and 'supari dene', to give areca-nut, are the two expressions which mean 'to invite', it being customary to offer a cocoanut or more often, an areca-nut to the leader of the 'tamasha' party, while inviting his troupe for a performance. The acceptance of the nut means the acceptance of the invitation. Some well-known 'tamasha' parties have a sort of standing invitation for an annual fair or a function. The amount of payment of one performance depends on the reputation of the party. Normally it varies from Rs. 50 to Rs. 80.

Of the religious occasions, Shimga and the annual village fairs are the ones which are invariably accompanied by 'tamasha' performances. For the festival or the fair of their home village, 'tamasha' troupes require no formal invitation and they often attend on their own and give their performances by turns. It is, therefore, by no means rare that on such occasions more parties than one present themselves. And then there is the additional fun of the contest.

Night is considered to be the proper time for the performance, which many times continues till the early hours of the morning. Light is provided by means of torches for which kerosene is used. Now-a-days gas-lamps are used when available.

After the monsoon, the 'tamasha' parties are particular to stage their first performance on an auspicious day. There is no rule as to where the first performance should be arranged; but it is usually done at the home village of the party.

Bombay city and the districts of Thana and Kolaba below the Sahyadri ranges, and the three districts of Nasik, Ahmednagar and Poona, immediately above these ranges, comprise the area in which Mahadev Koli 'tamasha' parties move. This is identical with their area of concentration as stated earlier. The



'tamasha' parties prefer villages to towns as they get better patronage in rural areas.

As the participants enter, they make obeisance to the audience. Each performer, as he enters, bends, bows down by touching the stage-floor with his right hand, with which he then touches his forehead. The procedure is at times followed three times in succession. A prayer in chorus is then offered. All this time incense is kept burning. After the prayer a coconut is broken and the kernel is distributed.

The general prayer, called 'arati', is followed by a couple of specific prayers in praise of Ganapati, the deity believed to overcome all difficulties and invariably worshipped at the beginning of all auspicious functions, entertainments and enterprises. Jingles are put on by the dancers before the prayer songs are sung, to avoid delay on that account, as they are subsequently needed. These songs in the praise of Ganapati are known as 'ganas'. There is a large stock of 'ganas' from which a couple of songs are chosen for a performance.

The item that follows the 'gana' songs is known as 'gavalan'. It presents one of the proverbial themes from the early life of Lord Krishna, who played pranks with the milk-maids proceeding to Mathura to sell their milk and milk-products. At first the dancer, whether a male or a female, dances for a short time to the accompaniment of music. Then they enact the Krishna-milk-maid theme. One of the members, acting an old aunt, who is to guide the group to the bazaar of Mathura, calls others by various names, and the other members respond to her call. The names are generally so chosen as to cause laughter among the audience. The dresses and other paraphernalia are simply improvised. The so-called milk-maids appear in male attire and carry whatever is handy to represent pots of milk and other things, they are supposed to take to the bazaar of Mathura. In the conversation which follows, the aunt asks the maidens, where they are proceeding and what they are carrying. The maidens reply that they intend to go to Mathura for the weekly bazaar and that they are carrying different milk-products for sale. This conversation gives an opportunity to the comedian to indulge in humour in his remarks. Krishna and his friend Sudama or Pendya, obstruct the path of the maidens. Sudama is a

famished figure and Pendya a lamish small boy. The maids sing some devotional songs, known as 'gavalan' songs, to the accompaniment of appropriate gestures and movements.

The first 'gavalan' song is a complaint against the mischievous behaviour of Lord Krishna. Then follows one in which Krishna is praised as an incarnation of God Vishnu and the third and last is a prayer offered to Krishna, requesting a blessing and help. This brings the 'gavalan' item to an end. The above account states the sequence of the varieties of songs and not their number which varies.

Next comes the farce. Some humorous story is still humorously presented in this item, the chief role being that of the comedian. There is usually no dancing at this time unless, of course, it is relevant to the story.

Between the farce and the 'vag' or crude-opera, which is the main item of the performance, there is an interlude of dance and song (Pl. 14). Modern songs from the movies and other popular ones are sung, the choice of the song resting with the audience, who are prepared to pay a two-anna pièce for the song of their choice. The dancer goes to the person to receive the coin, and at times there is a keen sense of rivalry amongst some enthusiasts in the audience, who seldom allow the dancer to remain on the stage for more than a couple of minutes, sometimes the situation leading to an impasse. The demands are so many and frequent that no song for some time at least can be sung at all.

Then starts the 'vag' (Pl. 15). Formerly the story used to be taken from the Puranas or was based on some historical incident. 'Tamasha' troupes have now taken to modern social themes which present the grievances and aspirations of the people. They have a direct appeal to emotions. But the 'vag' based on present day social themes is not the only field for an outlet to the people's emotions. They can, and many times do, touch upon any aspect of special social significance, even in the Pauranic themes, the success depending upon the skill of the performers to make the digression perfectly integrated. It is owing to this feature that the 'vag' has an indefinite duration ranging from one to three hours.

It is interesting to note that the songs sung during a 'vag' are sung by all, irrespective of their roles. Singing in the 'vag' is a teamwork.

The performance is brought to an end with the singing of a prayer.

The 'lezim', a very popular sport, as has been stated more often than once, is played very frequently as a side show or as an accompaniment of many a festival and procession. The drum that keeps time for the 'lezim' performance is the one common in Maharashtra for 'lezim'. Sometimes 'lezim' is played to the accompaniment of a full musical band. The Mahadev Koli performers are fairly expert at this jingling and thrilling sport. The three pictures (Pls. 16, 17, 18) illustrate particularly interesting formations and will enable the readers to compare Mahadev Koli performance with that of others.

The third main category of recreation is that of wrestling and holding wrestling bouts called, in the standard Marathi way, 'hagama'. 'Hagama' is quite often held at principal festivals and is a regular feature at most fairs. Plate 19 figures some typical Mahadev Koli wrestlers.

Fairs are of two kinds: those centring round a deity and those set up by a 'bohada'. A 'bohada' is a speechless performance of some Pauranic theme presented by actors wearing appropriate masks. It is an all-village function usually organised in summer on a day convenient to the villagers. Its currency is very much greater in the area under Konkan influence, namely the districts of Thana and Nasik.

The most frequent and standard fair of the other variety centres usually round the Gavadev, like Bahiroba and Kaloba. At such fairs there is no 'bohada' of masked characters. Its place is generally taken by a 'tamasha' performance. They are usually organised sometime in Chaitra. The day of the week is fixed, and is the one which is favourite with the presiding deity of the fair. In the evening on the day of the fair, villagers gather in the village temple of Maruti, and carrying an ochre flag hoisted at the top of a long bamboo pole go in a procession to the temple of the presiding deity of the fair. The flag-pole is called 'Kathi' in the general Maharashtrian way. The 'bhagat' worships the deity in the usual way and blows the sacred ash

in all directions. It is believed that the ash thus blown protects the village from all disease. There are some special features which are of the nature of impressive miracles associated with specific deities. Thus at Sakirwadi fair the carrying of live charcoal on the head by a 'bhagat' while circumambulating the temple of the local deity is a regular accompaniment. This is called Katha and the fair is called after it. Plate 20 portrays the actual occurrence.

## EPILOGUE

THE Mahadev Kolis have been described to-day as a Scheduled Tribe. Scheduled Tribes proper—the Hill Tribes or the so-called aborigines of the older terminology—are primarily the children of hills and forests. Most typically every settlement of theirs is wholly an exclusive settlement. The Mahadev Kolis, as the description in the preceding chapters will have made it clear to the reader, on the other hand, are children of agriculture with a more or less war-like tradition. As a community they are mostly scattered as either a dominant group among others, or as a subservient group where they are recent immigrants. The military tradition in earlier times naturally turned some of them to the acquisition of local chieftancy and others to dacoity. Even now there are some of them who will privately pride themselves in having effected a good robbery. Team-work for such enterprises seems to be ingrained in them. With all their past tradition, whether as keepers of forts, peaceful or turbulent, in spite of their utilization by the British in their early history in Western India, and particularly in the revolt of 1857, not many of them are known to have entered the army.

Their militant spirit is more rousable in group activities than in individual ones. So far back as in 1918 during the recruiting campaign of the First World War the people of the villages round about Akola town in the district of Ahmednagar came to believe that a Gosavi, a particular type of ascetic, had been forcibly fed meat and recruited for the army. A fair number of Mahadev Kolis joined the crowd of the Marathas of the area and marched in a body to the house of the Mamlatdar, the taluka magistrate, of Akola and burnt him alive in his house, he being the culprit in their eyes who had perpetrated the sacrilegious act. In the criminal action that ensued, more than half a dozen Marathas were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. How many Mahadev Kolis got punishment could not be ascertained.

In the national struggle for 1935, a fairly large number of

Mahadev Kolis of Akola taluka joined Forest Satyagraha movement and some of them went to jail.

Soon after, in 1937, one Dr. Bhutekar started a movement that nobody should work with the Gujar merchants of Khirwire alias Khirle as they were believed to be usurious and dishonest in their dealings with the public. The boycott movement succeeded for some time; but the tact of the Gujar merchants and the poverty of the Mahadev Kolis and others of the area bore down the movement and things began to work more or less normally. But whatever happened after a few years, though not ascertainable, must have been serious enough. For, in 1948 by which year the communists had reached the area and spread their influence, under communist leadership a crowd of people, as in the incident of 1918, marched to the village, sacked the shops of the Gujar merchants and without attacking any person took out all the account-books of the merchants and burnt them publicly. A number of Mahadev Kolis had participated in the incident. In the legal action that followed no one could be committed. It is generally agreed in the area that since then the Gujar merchants have been behaving in a fair manner.

In the final movement of 1942 which preceded the attainment of Independence and in the communist commotions of 1946 a number of Mahadev Kolis managed to go underground and help the respective movements.

The most recent incident in which some Mahadev Kolis including Rongate Guruji showed their militant spirit is the Satyagraha of Maharashtrians staged in New Delhi in 1956 to protest against the non-inclusion of the Bombay City in the State to be named United Maharashtra.

The position of the Mahadev Kolis to-day in the area of their great concentration—the upland villages in the north-western corners of Poona, Ahmednagar and Nasik districts—is that of dominant agriculturists. The other community in such villages to be found in fair numbers is the Mahar and, next to it are the Maratha, the Chambhar and two or three others. In the villages studied nothing but harmony of a sort among these communities is found. This situation will explain the sentiment manifest in many of the lives of the Mahadev Kolis, doing fairly well in the urban surroundings of Mulund and Bombay, in fav-

our of acquisition of some land in their home villages, and a longing for the pursuit of agriculture there.

Two agencies have provided whatever dynamics one meets with in the life of the Mahadev Kolis. One is education and the other urban life and occupations. The third agency which, if operative, would benefit the largest number of them is the multi-purpose rural uplift movement which is today known, though not quite logically, as Community Projects.

To begin with education, I shall give a brief account of students' hostels.

Hostels for Backward Class students, at central places all over the area inhabited by Mahadev Kolis, have given a fillip to education among the youth of the community. Most of the expenses are met with from Government grants. The management is expected to spend when the grant is insufficient, but in no case has the student to pay for his food or tuition. Many parents reported that they had to stop the education of their children because they could not afford to defray their necessary miscellaneous expenses. It is clear that free food and tuition are not adequate for the rapid spread of education in this community. Another serious complaint comes from the students regarding the quality of food that they get in the hostels. It is said that the organisers of hostels try to meet the food expenses from the grants received from the government for the purpose, their own contribution to them not being substantial. Students were found preferring outside arrangement to a hostel, whenever practicable, because of bad food. The usual practice is that the students live in the hostels and attend local schools. These days there are always more applicants than a hostel can accept and admission is difficult. This is due to the increasing number of primary schools in Mahadev Koli villages and bespeaks the growing desire for education in the community.

There are organisations like the Adivasi Seva Mandal of Bombay and Adivasi Seva Samiti of Nasik which have established and are managing hostels for the Backward Classes in the hilly area of the Sahyadri. In addition to such organisations, which have a number of hostels under their management, some hostels are run by local committees specifically formed for the purpose. The Sarvodaya Centres, too, run their own hostels in their jurisdiction. Some, again, are run by District Local Boards.

The Adivasi Seva Samiti ran four hostels with a total of 101 Backward students in them in the year 1945 when the Samiti started work. After ten years, in 1954-55 it was running seven hostels with 278 inmates. Of them 115 were Mahadev Kolis, 102 boys and 13 girls.

The hostels at Ambegaon and Ghodegaon in Poona district were started by the Mahadev Kolis for students of their community in 1907 with ten students on the roll at the Ambegaon Hostel. As the primary school at Ambegaon was running classes only upto the Marathi fifth standard students had to go to Ghodegaon for doing their sixth and seventh. Formerly, students were allowed to continue even after two or three failures, because there was no rush for admission. Since 1945 things have changed for the better, students even with one failure not being allowed to continue.

There was trouble when a Thakur<sup>1</sup> boy was admitted to the Ambegaon Hostel in 1924 and again when the Hostel was thrown open to all Backward Classes and a couple of students from the Scheduled Castes were admitted. But the management successfully got over it. These hostels are representative of the management and the difficulties of Backward Class hostels. In October 1955 the Ambegaon Hostel had on its roll thirty-six students from the Mahadev Koli and other Backward Class communities.

In addition to these hostels, some of the well-known hostels where Mahadev Koli students are found in large numbers are those at Nasik and Trimbakeshwar in Nasik district, Akola, Rajur, Samsherpur and Kotul in Ahmednagar district, Nimgiri in Poona district and Vada and Mokhada in the district of Thana. The Hostel at Rajur was founded in 1921 by the Sahyadri Seva Mandal, an organization started by the Mahadev Kolis, but was taken over by the Sarvodaya Centre when it started its work in the area. It appears that some Mahadev Kolis and others of Akola taluka resented the change in the management. They addressed an open letter to the then President of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee, Shri Devakinandan and distributed its printed copies to the public. As for the hostels,

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1. A Scheduled Tribe not considered as their equal by the generality of Mahadev Kolis.



the pamphlet charged the Sarvodaya management with grabbing away the credit for running the hostels from the original organizers who deserved it.

The leaven of the attraction of urban occupations appears to have begun to work even earlier than that of education. And here I must state at the outset that there is no evidence to show any significant influence of the leader of the community, the ruling family of Jawhar. The process has been entirely a folk-one working through the channels of kinship and neighbourhood. It is either through a neighbour of another community or later through a relative that most of the Mahadev Kolis that are to be met with in the urban areas of Bombay precipitated to their present place of work and occupation.

Realising the significance of the experiences and the living of persons of the Mahadev Koli community that have taken to urban areas, Dr. Chapekar took great pains to trace a number of these individuals and with dogged persistence and with great tact noted as complete life-histories as possible of about hundred persons in Mulund and twenty in Bombay City. During this part of the investigation the process of urban acculturation of this community has, it appears to me, been fully revealed. The life-histories themselves, at any rate many of them, are interesting as human documents. They show the trials of illiterate agriculturists in urban surroundings and occupations. They manifest the potentialities of these people for them and they further reveal the chances of illiterate cleverness to succeed in the modern world. I shall therefore narrate some of the most interesting ones, utilizing the data of others for a general picture of the dynamics of Mahadev Koli living.

Of the 119 persons whose original taluka could be ascertained, 93 are from Akola, 16 from Igatpuri, 3 from Junnar, 2 each from Ambegaon and Sinnar and one each from Ahmednagar and Sangamner. 121 persons declared their specific occupations. Of these, 56 are employed in the Asbestos Cement Co., 36 in the Railway, 7 in some manufacturing concerns, 4 in Textile Mills, 3 each in the mint and the All-India Radio, 2 in Bombay Police, one each in the Forward Markets Commission, the Post Office, the Bombay Port Trust, the Income Tax Office

and a quarrying concern; two are engaged in trade, one does tinning work and two again casual labour.

109 persons could give reliable information about the number of years they have been in this urban area. And the following statement summarises the details.

#### Statement VII

##### *Years of Residence in Mulund*

Number of years	5 or less	6 to 10	11 to 15	16 to 20	21 to 25	26 to 30	Over 30	Total
Persons	21	46	17	13	4	4	4	109

It will be seen that only four persons have been on this side for more than thirty years; and by far the larger bulk, namely 67, reached here only during the last ten years.

108 persons revealed the influence or the agency that was instrumental in bringing them here. Only 8 of them came by themselves, and only 7 came with their parents. The influence of the village or 'gav' and that of relationship is almost equally balanced, 44 persons returning each category of influence. In the relationship category, however, out of the 44 persons, 16 were brought either by brother or sister and 28 by relatives more remote. Friendship, as is to be naturally expected when the 'gav' influence is separately stated, is responsible for bringing few (5) persons only. 22 people in all could bring 195 of their friends and relatives for employment at Mulund.

The details available for the education of 116 persons reveal that 73 of them have none, 10 are literate, 7 have education upto the primary fourth and 6 upto Vernacular Final. 3 have been Matriculates, one Inter and one Graduate. The rest are not thoroughly specifiable.

Information about travel is available for only 54 persons of the total sample. Of these 16 never travelled anywhere beyond their village and the place of occupation, 18 travelled to Nasik-Trimbak, 13 to Pandharpur, 5 to Kashi-Banaras, 3 each to Alandi and Jejuri, 2 each to Dwarka and Vajreshwari, one each to Agra, Mathura, Gaya, Dehu, Shirdi, Gangapur, Verul and Poona.

It will be seen from this itinerary-statement that the travel has been mostly on pilgrimage and that the 'Varkari' influence of Maharashtra's saints is almost as strong as that of the specific deity of their community at a place where a strong section of it gets work on account of pilgrimage. The largest bulk of north Indian travel has been in almost all cases made possible because of railway service.

An effort was made to study the reading-habits, amusements and hobbies. 21 reported that they read some Marathi Daily, though only 11 said they bought one. One each stated that he read a weekly or a monthly. Of 56 persons providing information about their hobbies and amusements, 42 stated that they do 'bhajan', 11 practice wrestling and 7 visit the cinema.<sup>2</sup>

Among the total number only 13 have accepted a Guru and given up the use of some fruit.

It must be stated at the outset that from my data it becomes clear that the first urban contact of the Mahadev Kolis in appreciable concentration has been through Mulund. The Mahadev Kolis located as they are on the western spurs of the Sahyadri in the disericts of Ahmednagar and Nasik, when they descend into the Konkan have to come down first to Kasara. Thence, Kalyan, Bhivandi, Thana and Mulund are but natural stages if there are any attractions.

According to their account some stone-quarrying was going on in Mulund area about fifty years ago when a contractor induced a fair number of their castemen to come down for seasonal work. According to the same account, more than forty families moved down for this seasonal work and encamped at Mulund under large trees or even in the open. This contact with what was then not a fully urban area and with an occupation which is not necessarily urban, though depending upon the growth of towns and cities, gave some of the Mahadev Kolis a taste of the new fare. It must be said to the credit of these first workers that they proved themselves fairly worthy. For, soon after this seasonal contact a number of the more daring and progressive Mahadev Kolis sought and found more steady occupation and established more or less stable residence in Mulund.

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2. 4 persons reported more than one hobby

At this stage, most of these Mahadev Kolis, whether males or females, were engaged purely as day-labourers. It was sometime after the pioneers had worked in this way that the second stage of the urban acculturation of the Mahadev Kolis began.

Two ways could be opened up by illiterate but clever and able persons in such semi-urbanised areas as Mulund.\* First, one could take to some private enterprise combining agricultural and commercial skills like vegetable growing and selling or bringing hay and fuel from the jungle nearby and dealing in them. The second was to manage to get some experience in some technical or mechanical skill through some neighbour or acquaintance, and then to go in for some kind of skilled occupation. Both these kinds of upward paths are illustrated in the life-histories.

As already said, it is relatives and neighbours even of other communities who are responsible for attracting Mahadev Kolis from the interior to urban areas and occupations. The name of Dagdu Mukadam, a Mahar overseer in the Asbestos Cement Factory at Mulund, deserves special mention while dealing with the Mahadev Koli's flocking to Mulund. As an overseer he was in charge of recruitment of labour and he brought many Mahadev Kolis to Mulund to work under him from Akola taluka to which he belongs. Many Mahadev Kolis interviewed at Mulund referred to him with gratitude and he was publicly honoured in a conference of the Mahadev Kolis held at Mulund in the summer of 1956.

The picture of the dynamics of the Mahadev Koli life to be presented through life-histories cannot but most aptly begin with the lives and doings of two women.

X(55) comes from . . . Her old mother lives alone at . . . and often comes to her. She says that she has a brother who is not taceable for the last twelve yeas. At what age she was married is not known. When she was fourteen, her husband divorced her. Her father had already died. Her brother was evidently a small boy. The masterful woman somehow moved to Mulund where she has been resident now for more than forty years. She is thus, in my record, the earliest resident and one of the oldest among the Mahadev Kolis of Mulund, a

\* This unit was not included in Greater Bombay when this was written.

fact which appears to be in harmony with the opinion of the Mahadev Kolis of Mulund.

She has no education. She seems to have begun her career in Mulund by bringing hay from the forest and selling it. By and by she kept a few buffaloes and started selling milk. She asserts that at that time the quarrying work was going on and some of the Mahadev Kolis were employed on it. Flourishing through two gainful pursuits she rented a small plot and some-time back put up hutments on it. Having derived a monthly rent of Rs. 77/- she has been able to pay off the debt and buy up the plot. Even then she has not completely left her old activity. She still deals in hay though she does not herself go to the jungle to cut it. At the time of enquiry her plan for running a shop of sweets and such other small things was completed.

She has visited a number of places of pilgrimage in Maharashtra and is a vegetarian. All the same, the people assert that she is not only a gambler but also an opium and 'ganja' addict.

Another woman from Ekdara near Rajur in Akola taluka has done even better. She (50) says that she came to Mulund thirty years ago. Then she was already a widow. She came at a time when quite a number of people from Ekdara and villages nearby were coming to Mulund for work. Evidently her husband had another wife because she still speaks of her step-children being at Ekdara. For many years past she has been living in Mulund. She managed to hire a vegetable plot and cultivated 'alu', yam, on it. Her business prospered and she brought a small building-plot. She was able to raise a fairly large loan out of which she built on the plot two good chawls. They bring her a monthly rent of Rs. 231/-. In her business she has an Agri partner who with his wife and children lives with her. She is a non-vegetarian. She has yet to pay off a debt of about Rs. 8000/- and is yet not worried about it. She prides herself on having brought down about fifty Mahadev Kolis from their villages in Akola taluka and got them employed in the urban areas round Mulund.

As showing the capacity for wanderings and vicissitudes, Dagdu's (40) life deserves mention first among the dozen or so male lives that will help to complete the picture of the dyna-

mics of the life of illiterate Mahadev Kolis. Dagdu says that his eldest son who is already married and lives at his home village Vihir in Akola taluka is twentythree years old and his daughter, also already married, is thirteen years. He is at present living with his wife in Mulund and being employed in the Engineering Department of the Central Railway goes for work to Kurla. He has been at Mulund for over twenty years. At present his pay is Rs. 90/- per month. Before coming to Mulund he was at Shivdi. And before reaching there he had already worked for two years in the tea plantations of Assam. Dagdu, who by his itinerary demonstrates enterprising nature, had his son fairly educated. Though he had passed his Vernacular Final examination, Dagdu sent him home to attend to his agricultural land. This action of an enterprising man like Dagdu and the reaction to it of a Vernacular Final youth is but one of the many instances that demonstrate the strong sentiment of the urban Mahadev Kolis towards their rural home and their ancestral occupation.

As Dagdu states, there is also an additional reason for his action. And that is the new land Acts. According to him the new Acts will deprive him of his ancestral land if he or his son would not cultivate it. As Dagdu himself was earning good pay, he naturally entrusted agriculture to his son. As an intelligent man, Dagdu desired to provide himself and his son with sufficiency out of agriculture. About seven or eight years back he bought sixteen acres of upland inferior land for Rs. 250/-. Evidently, better land was not available; and even this piece he got because it was earlier mortgaged. This instance is a very typical demonstration of the land-hunger and land-dearth in the region of the Mahadev Kolis.

Dagdu's main sorrows, namely, the deaths of his three sons, are illustrative of the principal trial of the Mahadev Kolis in these urban areas. The death-rate among children, as shown earlier, is very high.

If Dagdu distinguishes himself by his wanderings, Punaji (45), five years older than him is distinguished for his large, well-placed and urbanly located family. He comes from another area of Mahadev Koli concentration, namely Katthurvangan in Igatpuri taluka of Nasik district. His father and two of

his brothers were employed in the Railway; and that is how he is at present in the Asbestos Cement Factory at Mulund. He is earning Rs. 100/- a month. A brother of his is also employed in the factory.

His brother lives separately. His three sons, all of whom are married, live with him. One of them has an infant daughter. Two are employed, one in the Asbestos Cement Factory, and another in a wire-drawing factory at Vikroli. His third son was studying in the eighth standard. With all his earnings Punaji says he could not afford to continue his son's education. Yet his two daughters are studying, one in the fifth and the other in the second standard in a local Marathi school. His daughters-in-law, except the eldest, are schooled upto Marathi fourth or fifth standard. Punaji availed himself of his father's railway employment to make a pilgrimage to Mathura.

Punaji's ancestral land is at present cultivated by his mother's brother's son. But Punaji and his brother pay the revenue tax; and Punaji is positive that he will return to his land.

One special feature of Punaji's, indicative of a trend, is that all his three sons are married to girls from the local or nearby urban areas, namely Mulund, Kalyan and Bhandup.

Punaji's frank admission in regard to his son's stoppage of education poses a problem that has presented itself to the Mahadev Koli community. Punaji having listed his caste as Maratha, his son cannot get the benefits of the Scheduled Tribes educational scheme. Punaji for one, having stopped the education of his son, has made his choice between the alternatives. He values caste status more than the little education that his son can get out of the benefits reserved for the Scheduled Tribes.

Bhima, same age as Punaji, comes from Kopra in Junnar taluka and is even more dynamic in his reactions. He has a brother who is a Jamadar in the Police Department in which his father was also serving. And though his brother got educated, Bhima remained illiterate. He has been in Mulund for the last sixteen years and earns Rs. 90/- a month in the Asbestos Cement Factory. He first came to his in-law relations at Matunga in Bombay and, being impressed with the new potentialities, took service. He has three sons and one daughter. The daughter, who is three months old, is the child of his second wife.

All the sons are the children of his first wife who is dead. His eldest son (20) lives separately with his wife and a three-year old daughter in Mulund working as a day-labourer. The second son (16), who failed in the Vernacular Final examination, with his wife, his six-month old daughter and the youngest brother (7), manages the family estate at Kopra. The youngest son has just begun to go to school there. Bhima says that he sends them Rs. 40/- a month.

Bhima goes to his village twice or thrice a year and expects to return there permanently after retirement. The dynamic nature of his family is reflected not only in his second son's education but also in the fact that the wives of both the brothers, the Police Jamadar and Bhima, are fully literate, the Jamadar's wife having done her Marathi seventh standard and Bhima's fourth. The names of the daughters of these two brothers reflect their dynamic nature. As the Jamadar named his daughter Shashikala, Bhima calls his daughter Chandrakala, both very modern names. Bhima's wife likes to read newspapers if she come across them. She knows some embroidery and knitting and turns out a few things in this line. Both of them generally visit Bombay on occasions like Narali-Purnima. Their residence is one of the few ones which has a chair and which possesses family photos hanging on the wall. There is a photo of Bhima's father. Besides, there are pictures of the deities Rama-Sita, Balakrishna and Satyanarayan.

Sakharam (48), three years older than Bhima, has been in Mulund for about seventeen years. He comes from Korapgaon in Igatpuri taluka, and lives with his wife and one of his sons (11). His daughter (28) is married. His eldest son (25) lives separately with his wife and one-month old daughter. In his childhood he was sent to school, but if he had learnt anything he has forgotten it so that he is illiterate today. Sakharam's younger son (11) is formally studying in the Marathi first standard. His attendance, according to Sakharam, is very irregular. Sakharam is employed in the Railway and earns Rs. 70/- a month. He has neither land nor house at his home village. Yet once or twice a year he feels like going home to see his relatives. But his son whose father-in-law is serving on this side does not go to his village.



Sakharam is very unfortunate in that his wife got blind. She is one of the very few infirmities that one comes across among Mahadev Kolis whether from the rural or the urban area.

The agricultural bent of the mind of the Mahadev Kolis is nowhere better illustrated than in this case. Sakharam for some years past has been managing a fairly large agri-horticultural field whose revenue tax is sixty rupees a year. Sakharam's son and Sakharam manage the field between them. His son looks after the mango trees and the grass and Sakharam after the rice fields. Last year he got about fifty maunds of paddy of which one-third he paid to his landlord as rent. Sakharam says that there is some litigation going on about the fields in his charge. If he is able to retain his tenancy he has no mind to return to his village where, of course, he has nothing to look for. It is noteworthy of the solidarity of the caste, that the Mahadev Kolis of Mulund are helping Sakharam in the litigation.

Sakharam is an illustration of an institution which is not very uncommon among the Mahadev Kolis, but is much more common in the agricultural classes from the middle Konkan. He accepted a Guru in his early youth. This institution requires renouncement of some fruit, as mentioned earlier, and Sakharam renounced fig. And his eldest son has followed his example.

Bhaga (44) of Adoli in Igatpuri taluka, a gymnast ('pehelvan') for many years, after having won a number of prizes in wrestling, married at the age of thirty a grown-up girl of twenty from a fairly well-to-do agriculturist's family. Not having a child, he waited for ten years and, four years back, married a younger girl of fifteen. He lives in Mulund with his younger wife and is still childless. He owns some land and cattle, whose management he had entrusted to his brother. Not having found the arrangement satisfactory, he has sent his senior wife to look after them. He is employed in Parel Workshops and has been in this urban area for more than twenty years. His passion for wrestling and his skill therein were acquired by him in his urban surroundings at Kalyan. Actually there was a gymnasium managed by the Kolis in Mulund till very recently. Bhaga came to Mulund to his elder brother who was already

there. There was a fourth brother, but of these two no information has been collected. He earns Rs. 90/- a month and sends about Rs. 15/- to his senior wife at home. Bhaga is a careful manager for, after the partition of the ancestral property between the four brothers, he built a good house for himself which cost him about Rs. 700/-. He bought agricultural land worth about Rs. 2,000/-. This investment was made possible partly by a loan and partly by his savings. As he says that he built the house last year and that, of the debt, he has to repay only three hundred rupees, he appears to have made a saving of six to seven hundred rupees, a rather large sum for a man earning only Rs. 90/- a month.

To Lalu (53) goes the distinction of being the greatest earner among the illiterate urban Kolis. He came to Matunga about twenty-five years ago and has been in Mulund for the last thirteen years. He earns Rs. 175/- a month and lives with his wife. His two daughters are already married, one of them at Mumbra, on the other side of Thana. His old father lives at his home village, Satewadi in Akola taluka, to whom, he says, he sends about Rs. 30/- a month. His arrival at Matunga and his employment there was due to his father's brother who was already there. He has a brother who is working as a day-labourer at Pen, in Kolaba district, and has six children. Lalu does not seem to have much intercourse with him.

As aspects of Koli dynamics illustrated in this case-study, I may mention first of all the more common one, namely, the fact that both of his sons-in-law have passed the Vernacular Final. The infrequent new feature is, first Lalu's wife, though not educated, and though coming from a village, does not like village life and therefore does not go to her husband's home village or even to her widowed sister, for whom she has shown much concern. The second not uncommon feature is that she came to Lalu as a widow and has been living with him without marriage ('pat'); the third feature, rather uncommon, is that she is fond of dramas and pictures, though Lalu is not; fourth, she has built a house for her widowed sister at her home village where the latter manages her deceased husband's agricultural

estate; and fifth, she was employed for some time in Bombay mills before she came to Lalu.

Soma (55) is one of the oldest of the Mahadev Kolis in Mulund. He is a thrice-married man. His regular first wife died early. He married a widow and, not having had any child from her, he married another widow and has now two wives. He has four children by this wife and six died. Both his sons (21 and 19) are married as also his daughters. He is employed in the Asbestos Cement Factory and earns about Rs. 100/- a month. His eldest son with his wife lives in his father-in-law's place and at his village, the latter being childless. Soma came to Mulund about eleven years back to his father's brother's son. His second son was temporarily employed in the Mulund Municipality till recently. One of his brothers was employed at Thana. He was formerly interested in wrestling. He possesses a good cot and keeps a big dog. He says that Khandoba of Jejuri is his family deity and that he has paid a visit to it. At the time of enquiry Jivati was installed for worship. He accepted a Guru while he was still young and he does not remember whether he renounced sitpahal' (custard apple) or 'ramphal'.

Though he has been on a pilgrimatge to Jejuri and keeps pictures of deities hanging on his wall, he is cynical enough to say about his renouncement of the fruit, "Well, after all, where was I going to get a 'sitpahal' or a 'ramphal'!"

Here is another case of an infirmity amongst Mahadev Kolis, Soma's wife being lame. She met with a railway accident before marriage and it led to the amputation of one of her legs.

Devram (32) from Dhamangaon in Akola taluka lives with his wife and two children of whom, his married daughter, is only temporarily there. She can read and write. Devram's son though fifteen is studying only in the third Marathi standard. Both his children are the progeny of his first wife who died about twelve years after marriage. After his wife's death, he came to Mulund with his children through another Mahadev Koli who, however, returned to his village immediately. He says that he got no education because his father died early. Formerly he had a passion for gymnastics. Now he has a passion for 'lavnis' or popular love-songs. He possesses a cot, and keeps some fowl. His wife brings fuel from the forest. He

practises 'bhajan'. He accepted a Guru when quite young, and it is noteworthy that on that preceptor's death, he accepted another. In both cases, however, he made the same renouncement, namely that of fig. He did not fail to assure that the whole family is well-up in agricultural work and that he will return to his home village to take charge of his ancestral land which is at present managed by his father's brother's son.

Bhadaji (45) of Kolungan near Rajur in Akola taluka, three years younger than Soma, is much more interesting for the dynamics of Mahadev Koli life not only than Soma but some others so far described, though he has lived in Mulund for about nine years now. He has no children though married for twenty-five years. He is employed in the Asbestos Cement Factory and earns Rs. 100/- a month. The special interest of this life begins with the fact that Bhadaji was brought to his present employment by Dagdu Mukadam, a Mahar from Gondoshi; second, he joined in a strike, lost his employment and regained it. His old parents live at his home village with his four brothers and their families. He visits them almost every month. Bhadaji gives them nearly Rs. 50/- every month. He keeps a dog. He is a 'Bhagat', that is priest-magician, and is a vegetarian. His wife has made a pilgrimage to Pandharpur; and Bhadaji says he did not do it because his parents had not done it. Bhadaji is fond of social work and is the vice-president of the Adivasi Seva Sangh started by the Mahadev Kolis of Mulund in 1951. In spite of all this, Bhadaji wants to go back to his village after retirement. And he has given a very concrete proof of his deep interest in his village property. He says that he bought land worth Rs 500/- and invested Rs. 2,500/- in building a house. He says that this was made possible by his receiving Rs. 2,000/- as his provident fund last year.

Bahiru (35) living with his wife, and childless after nine years of marriage, has two brothers at his home village, one of whom is married. He has been in Mulund for about fifteen years and earns Rs. 97/- a month as an employee in the Parel Workshops of the Central Railway. He says that he has repaired his house in his home village and brought land worth Rs. 900/-. He will return to his home village after retirement.

His father having had two wives, Bahiru has some step-brothers who separated from him only two years back.

This life reveals the only case of leprosy that is on record among the two hundred fifty and odd families closely investigated. Bahiru's father was a leper. But so far none of his descendants has shown that disease.

Rama (35) is rather atypical in that during his occupational career of about twenty-three years he has changed places and employment more often than any one else on my record. Rama was an orphan nurtured by his grandmother. At about twelve years of age, leaving his home village of Rajur, he took some service in the Railway at Igatpuri. After some time he precipitated to Mulund where he worked as a gangman for four years. Thereafter he worked at Vikroli for five years in a cast-iron factory. Then as an employee of the Bombay Municipality he worked at Pavai for two years. For the last five years and more, he has been employed in Bhagat & Co., structural engineers. He earns Rs. 70/- a month and lives with his wife, childless though married for ten years. He is confident that with his provident fund he will be able to buy some land at his home village and to live there after retirement.

Lakshman (30) has no education. He comes from Dhamaongaon in Akola. He lives with his second wife (25) and his younger brother (25). Two years after the death of his first wife, Lakshman married for the second time three years back. He had a child by her which died within three months of its birth. Lakshman's younger brother is married but being unemployed, has not brought his wife, though over twenty, to Mulund. Lakshman's family estate is looked after by his father's brother's son. His mother has remarried and lives with her new husband at Nimgiri in Junnar. Lakshman has been in Mulund for over twelve years and earns Rs. 100/- a month in the Asbestos Cement Factory. He gives about Rs. 20/- a year to his remarried mother when he goes to her.

The case-histories presented so far give a fairly realistic idea of the experience, failures and successes in urban areas of Mahadev Kolis born before 1925. To complete the picture of the dynamics of Mahadev Koli life operative through urban oc-

cupations it is quite necessary to narrate the experiences and circumstances of life of some of those born after 1930.

I shall begin this part of the picture with Lakshman of Rajur aged twenty-six years. His father lives at Rajur with his eldest and the youngest brothers, both of whom are married. His eldest sister (45) being a discarded wife lives with his father at Rajur. At Mulund he lives with his wife, two sons (3, 1½), and another brother and his wife. He is employed in the Asbestos Cement Factory and earns about Rs. 90/- a month, and his brother, who has had schooling upto fifth Marathi standard, earns Rs. 80/- per month as a gangman in the Central Railway. They send about Rs. 50/- a month to their father. For agricultural operations their wives usually go to the home village and they themselves visit it every three or four months. Lakshman came to Mulund about ten years back at the instance of his sister's husband. He wants to return home after retirement. Lakshman's son gets milk to drink.

Namdev (26) of Ekdara in Akola taluka lives at Mulund with his wife and young son. His sister is already married. One of his brother lives with his wife and daughter at Ekdara. Namdev who earns Rs. 100/- a month in the Asbestos Cement Factory says that he sends about Rs. 40/- to his brother. Another brother of his lives at Ekdara separately. Namdev came to Mulund at the invitation of his father's brother's son. Though he has been employed for twelve years, he says that he is still in debt.

He has a 'charpoy' and some pictures in his room. He keeps fowl. He likes 'bhajan'. Like Lakshman, he too gives milk to his son.

Balu (25) from Shirpunje in Akola taluka lives at Mulund with his wife and two children. His mother, with three brothers of his, lives at Shirpunje. None of them has had any schooling. He is an employee of the Asbestos Cement Factory for over nine years, and earns today Rs. 100/- a month. He sends home Rs. 10/- monthly. He and his wife used to go to his home village for agricultural operations till recently, but now that his brothers are grown and competent they do not go. He says that he supported his grandmother, bought land from his father's sister valued at Rs. 400/- and spent Rs. 3,500/- on

his house at Shirpunje. He has yet to repay about Rs. 600/- out of the debt that he had incurred on that account. He is fond of 'bhajan' and ardently desires to school his children.

Balu is most unique in exploiting the potentialities of Mulund for residential provision. He has rented a site for Rs. 5/- a month on which he has built a hut which when completed will have cost him about Rs. 100/-.

Bhima (22) from Karandi in Akola lives by himself at Shivdi. His father, mother and three brothers, two elder and one younger, live at his home village. He has been in Shivdi for only a year. He came in the company of some people of his village and with their help got employed in Tata Co. where he earns Rs. 100/- a month. He sends home Rs. 50/- a month. He is fond of gymnastics and regularly visits a gymnasium at Shivdi. Though he has had no schooling, his eldest brother has passed Marathi fourth standard and his youngest brother is studying in the eighth standard in a school at Parner, living in the Backward Class Hostel there.

Hari (22) of Kothale in Akola taluka has three brothers at his home village, all of them married. Hari is also married and has a son (2). With him lives a companion who is married but has left his wife at home. Neither Hari, nor any of his brothers or their wives has had any schooling. Hari who earns Rs. 90/- a month in the Asbestos Cement Factory says that he sends home Rs. 40/- a month. In spite of this, he says that he invested Rs. 900/- in the repair of the ancestral house and bought land worth Rs. 300/-!

First he came to Kurla at the instance of his brother's father-in-law and after serving there for two years, he has been in the Asbestos Cement Factory for the last eight years. Hari says that his brothers are fond of wrestling and himself practises gymnastics. Hari who is fond of 'bhajan' and plays on the 'pakh-waj', a rare attainment, practices it at home. He has some pictures of deities in his room.

In the hundred and odd life-histories in my collection there are only two persons who have managed to get out of their purely manual labour heritage and have acquired some kind of artisan skill.

Lakshman (30) of Randha Khurd in Akola taluka, now re-

sident at Mulund with his wife and daughter (9), is employed in a factory as a labourer and as such earns Rs. 110/- a month. He has another wife who generally lives at his home village, with her own mother. In all probability, as she is the first wife and has no child, Lakshman married second time for a child. He says that he has some ancestral land which is cultivated by his grandfather's brother's son. His second wife is the second cousin through father's side of his first wife. He sends Rs 15/- a month to his senior wife.

He possesses sufficient skill in carpentry and earns Rs. 15/- a month by it as a side-occupation. He is a much travelled man. With an English officer who had been to Randha for hunting, he travelled to Delhi, Kashi, Calcutta and then returned to Delhi though not as a servant of his former employer. In his second visit he came across a Marathi-speaking carpenter working in Delhi. Working under him, he acquired his skill in carpentry. After some time he left Delhi and precipitated to a friend, Mahar by caste, residing in Dadar. Thence he got to Mulund where he has been living for the last ten years. When he was out of employment for about three months he earned during that period Rs. 150/- by carpentry.

He is not only fond of 'bhajan' (chanting of religious songs in chorus) and 'tamasha' (ballad plays) but, what is peculiar, also of flying pigeons. Even with such new tastes cultivated, Lakshman still desires to return to his village after retirement. He has engaged a private tutor to coach his daughter at home.

Gunaji (20), much younger than Lakshman, is the youngest of three brothers all of whom are unmarried, and has been living at Mulund for six or seven years. When he came here from Kelungan in Akola, one of his brothers was employed in the Asbestos Cement Factory. Now, however, both his elder brothers live in their village. When he came to Mulund first, he took service as a helper with a tinman on a daily wage of eight annas. Later, though he was being paid Rs. 3/- a day, he left the service and started to work as a tinman by himself. His average daily earnings vary between Rs. 2/- to Rs. 4/-. He cooks his own food and lives very frugally. That is why even after sending Rs. 10/- to Rs. 15/- a month to his brother at home



Gunaji has been able to buy land worth Rs 750/-. He is not averse to taking service and desires to accept a Guru.

Dynamics of education, though smaller in extent, is very much deeper and almost different in kind. As stated earlier, special hostels for Mahadev Kolis came into existence about forty years ago. Whatever fillip these gave to spread of education among them, its direct result could have been largely for primary and partly for high school education. Yet there are at least three Koli graduates. One of these and two undergraduates have risen to the position of taluka magistrates, that is, Mamlatdars. Two of them were approached for an account of their lives but to no purpose. Of the two other graduates my record contains the case of one. Ant it will be narrated in due course. The other, who was a social worker at Mulund, is at present a high school teacher at Satana in Nasik district.

Kawji (53) is the son of a Patil of Rajewadi in Junnar taluka. He is qualified as a first-year trained teacher. He has also completed a short course in Ayurvedic First Aid. His father died when he was two years old. He had three brothers and two sisters. His eldest brother died of snake-bite in 1917. This is one of the two cases of snake-bites that are on my record. In the kind of terrain and with the kind of occupation with which the largest bulk of Mahadev Kolis are concerned, snake-bite is an ever-present adjunct. His wife who was pregnant at the time gave birth to a son. He is now head-clerk in a civil court. His own son-in-law is a clerk in a military establishment and is at present in Kashmir. His elder sister was married to a servant living with them and looking after their fields. After giving birth to a daughter, she died of influenza in 1919. His younger brother is already dead; so too, is his eldest brother's wife, both, it would appear, having been victims of influenza. His mother died in 1921 and his other sister passed away in 1929 leaving two sons and one daughter. He himself had eight children. Three of his sons died and three sons and two daughters are living. His brother's son has studied upto Matriculation.

While he was in third standard Marathi, he had to discontinue his education. He began his education again in 1920 by entering the Koli Hostel at Ambegaon. After having finished his fifth, he entered the Hostel at Ghodegaon from where he

passed the Vernacular Final in 1925. With the help of his teacher Mukundrao Chavan he succeeded in getting admitted to the Teacher's Training College at Poona. There he passed the first year examination and thereafter completed a course in Ayurvedic First Aid.

He was appointed as a teacher-cum-medical helper at Peth in Ambegaon taluka. In 1932 the District Local Board closed the medical help centre at Peth and Kawji was transferred to Taleghar. Later he was transferred to Junnar taluka from where he resigned in 1946 in order to be a candidate on behalf of the Koli Union for the District Local Board. He was elected member of the Board where he continued till 1952.<sup>3</sup>

After his resignation from service, the business that he took to since 1946 is a natural extension of old Koli life with the application of new intelligence and energy. Kawji, even when he was a teacher at Peth, had noticed the exploitation of the Kolis at the hands of 'hirda'<sup>4</sup> merchants. One of the occupations of the Mahadev Kolis in the upland is to collect 'hirda' from the forest and deliver it to merchants for sale at some trading centre nearby, taking an advance against the goods delivered or promised. In these transactions Kawji saw that the Koli was not getting a fair deal. He tried to admonish the merchants and appraise his castemen but without much success. When he retired from the Local Board he took to the business of 'hirda'. He mentions with gratitude the encouragement that he received from one Balasahab Natu from Peth in this enterprise. The established merchants in the line naturally gave him trouble. But he persisted. And he succeeded beyond expectation. He says he spent at least five to six thousand rupees on education and marriages of his wards, and has bought land in four different villages valued at about Rs. 25,000/-

Between 1931 and about 1940 he appears to have taken a leading part in erecting a building for a Koli hostel in his area. During the same period he organised the Koli Teachers' Association in Poona and the Poona District Koli Association for

3. Shri G. S. Bhangare, M.L.A. from Shendi in Akola was also a primary teacher before he resigned for contesting the election. As I go to press, it is my sad duty to record the untimely demise of this fine social worker.

4. Terminalia Chebula.

fighting elections to the District Local Board. As he points out, from 1931 to about 1946 these elections used to be hotly contested. He says that he had also started a Co-operative Society of Kolis of which he worked as the Chairman for four years.

Kalu (55), is another senior Mahadev Koli with some education, third Marathi standard, to his credit. Though resident of Shenvad in Igatpuri, he lived with his mother's brother at Kasara and got some education there. But unfortunately, his father died and he had to return to Shenvad. He has been in Mulund for the last twenty years, and has been able to get employment for half a dozen Mahadev Kolis. He has retired from employment owing to failing eyesight. His household at Mulund consists of himself, his younger brother (45), his eldest son (30) and his wife, another son (25), and still another (10). His brother's family consisting of wife and four children live at Shenvad. And the eldest boy is studying in Marathi third. With them lives Kalu's father's brother's widow. They manage the family estate. His eldest and second son have studied upto the fifth standard. His third son is studying in the third standard. His daughter-in-law who hails from Thana, too, has completed her fifth standard. His brother and his eldest son each earns Rs. 125/- per month in the Asbestos Cement Factory. The second son works as a casual labourer. He says that he had to stop their education because of economic handicaps.

Kalu's life-history illustrates the dynamics of urban association and literate status in an all-round manner. Kalu is a 'malakari', a term which one comes across frequently among agricultural classes particularly in Poona district. It means one, who having made a pilgrimage to Pandharpur and having dedicated himself to the worship of Vithoba, wears a necklace of 'tulsi' beads and totally abstains from meat and drink. His youngest son aged ten is already marked out to carry forward the tradition and abides by the rules. Kalu says he used to read Tukaram's collection of devotional poems (*Gatha*) and now his daughter-in-law does it for him.

His daughter-in-law has been to Bombay once or twice, but she will not be able to go by herself. All the members of the family excepting Kalu are fond of the cinema. Kalu's daughter-in-law knows embroidery and knitting and prepares

small articles. She prepares eatables, like 'chivda', 'ladu', 'kad-boli', 'karanjya' and 'shankarpale', generally found only in good tea-shops and upper class homes.

Kalu's daughter-in-law while in school had few Prabhu girls as her friends but after her marriage there is no contact.

Sakharam (38) represents an almost unique phenomenon amongst Mahadev Kolis. His father was in some kind of military employment at Ahmednagar. Sakharam, however, did not have the advantages of town life. He was schooling at his home village Devargaon and left school after finishing the Marathi fourth standard. At present he lives at Mulund where he came about fifteen years back. He earns Rs. 130/- a month in the Asbestos Cement Factory. Thus, he is one of the few high-earners among Mahadev Kolis. He had a brother whose widow lives at Shenit, a village not even two miles distant from Devargaon. She is all alone and for the last four years manages the agricultural land there which Sakharam bought. Sakharam's house at Devargaon is in the occupation of some old acquaintance of his and Sakharam goes there once in a year, though he has no particular attraction, his wife being from Bhivandi near Kalyan. Sakharam has travelled to Ahmedabad, Raichur, Manmad and Poona on Company's work. Having been a 'mukadam', overseer, he has been able to get employment in his factory for half-a-dozen Mahadev Kolis. He used to interest himself in uplift work till recently. Unfortunately his health now does not permit him to take any active part in it. Some months back under a bronchial attack he contracted asthma. Sakharam desires to go back to his village and engage in agriculture. Though married for more than ten years he has no child. He has a liking for cards.

There are only three sewing machines, encountered in the survey, with Mahadev Kolis. Of the two machines at Mulund, Sakharam's wife happens to be the only woman to own one, the other being with a Mahadev Koli male. She not only stitches her own bodices or rather blouses but those of others too and thus adds her mite to the household income.

Bahiru (35) from Khed in Igatpuri taluka had to cut short his education after Marathi fourth owing to his father's death. He came to Mulund sixteen years back at the instance and encouragement of his wife's brother. In the Asbestos Cement

Factory he earns Rs. 125/- a month. His widowed mother lives at his village. His elder brother being separate from him, lives independently with his wife in a portion of the house assigned to him as his share at the home village. Bahiru says that he sends home Rs. 50/- a month, the bulk for his mother, and some for his brother though separated from him. Bahiru's wife goes to the village seasonally to work on the family estate. He himself goes there almost every fortnight. He lives in Mulund with his eldest son (14), the only child of his deceased first wife, and his present wife (25) and her three children (7,4,2). His eldest son studies in the fifth standard and Bahiru intends to give him as much education as he would take and hopes to send his seven-year old daughter to school very soon. He is a vegetarian and the diet at home for all is vegetarian. He had been to Nasik, Trimbak and Nirmal, a place famous for its 'jatra'. He had taken his wife to the Victoria Gardens and other places of interest in Bombay. His children were seen using face-powder. He is fond of 'bhajan'. His wife can and does make, over and above the common 'puranpoli', the rarer eatables, namely, 'ladu' and 'shira'. Bahiru wants to go to his village after retirement.

Rupa (35) of Maveshi near Rajur had to cut short education after Marathi fifth owing to poverty. For a part of the education he had to walk to Rajur, a distance of about three miles. About seventeen years back he came with his village people to Byculla. For the last two years or more he has been living in Mulund and working as a day-labourer in the Asbestos Cement Factory. He earns about Rs. 55/- a month. At Mulund he lives with his friend and sends Rs. 30/- a month home where live his father, his step-mother, his wife and seven children. His eldest son having studied upto Marathi fourth is now engaged in agriculture. The second son stopped short with the Marathi second standard and now herds cattle. Two other sons are taking education one in the third and the younger in the second standard. The daughters are too young to go to school. He is fond of 'bhajan'.

Punaji (35) came to Mulund long before 1936, when he was schooling. One of his sisters was living in Mulund and Punaji lived with her till her death by which time he had finish-

ed his Primary Marathi course. Another elder sister of his lives at Igatpuri. His elder brother, with his wife and two sons, lives at his village Shirpunje in Akola and manages the family property which is still undivided. It was Punaji who managed the marriages of his elder brother and himself. He has gone through a variety of employments beginning in 1936 on 20/- a month. To-day he is serving as a fitter in an engineering firm on a daily wage basis and earns about Rs. 100/- a month. He sends home about 5 to 7 rupees a month and goes there about once a year. He has not been able to save much and has only bought some bullocks for agriculture. His household consists of his wife Shantabai (24), his son Arun (4) and an infant daughter. Both he and his wife had been to Pandharpur and Trimbak. He rarely buys newspapers but regularly reads one at his place of work. Pictures of deities hang on the walls of his house. There is also a clock. Both the deliveries of his wife took place at her father's place. Punaji says that he is interested in social work, though through him no Mahadev Koli so far has been placed in employment. He accepted a Guru when he was very young. This is the only Guru mentioned by name in my list of case-studies. His name is Avinashbaba. At his initiation Punaji renounced 'ramphal'. Punaji's wife knows agricultural work and he says that though he does not know it, after retirement he will go to his home village. He is a rare one smoking cigarettes. It may be mentioned here that smoking is generally less marked even among these urbanized Mahadev Kolis.

Amrita (30), educated fourth standard Marathi, says that he left off education because of poverty. His younger brother came for employment to Mulund about nine years back. Amrita came here three years after him. That brother of his now lives separately. Amrita lives with his wife, his daughter (5) and son (3). With him also lives the eldest son (19) of his brother who lives at Sakirwadi, his home village. The nephew serves as a postman in Bombay and was due to appear for the S.S.C. this year. On the family estate lives his brother; and his step-brother lives separately.

Amrita is a day-labourer working in a stone quarry at Bhandup. In the monsoon the work stops and Amrita goes to Sakirwadi. Amrita and his nephew, between them, buy the

Marathi Daily *Lokasatta* regularly. They have to pay Rs. 6/- as rent and have to send home Rs. 30/- a month. His children are given milk.

Amrita's nephew took his education at Sakirwadi and then through the hostels at Sangamner, Akola and Nasik. He is an expert on the 'dhol' (double-faced drum); and all of them are fond of 'bhajan'. The nephew has a paternal cousin, one Konkna, and two Mahar youths, who were his co-students, as his friends.

Kisan (30) is schooled upto the Marathi fourth. His father and his father's brother were serving at Kasara and at Kalyan. Though he continued his education sometime after his father's death, poverty forced him out of it. He is from Katthurvangan in Igatpuri and has been living in Mulund for more than fifteen years. He is a 'mukadam', overseer, in the Asbestos Cement Factory and earns Rs. 150/- a month. Like his father and uncle he worked in the Railway for the first eight or nine years but finding the earnings insufficient left the job. For sometime he tried selling newspapers and ultimately settled in his present employment. He lives in one of the Company's chawls with his wife, four sons and two daughters. Two of his cousins are also employed in the same Company. Three of his sons and one daughter are taking education in the school run by the Company, the eldest being in the fourth standard. At his home village he has no near relatives, nor any land nor house.

It should be noted that he has to pay for his quarters only Rs. 2/- a month as upkeep charges. He has purchased a plot and a chawl in partnership. They yield him Rs. 40/- a month.

He has been to Pandharpur, Ganagapur and Shirdi and regularly goes every year to Trimbak. He is a 'malakari' and hence a strict vegetarian. His wife, too, though not a 'malakari', is a vegetarian.

He desires to teach his children, including daughters, as much as they would like. They are given milk, dried dates and copra for their breakfast.

Kisan does not buy any newspaper. He is not only fond of 'bhajan' but is an adept at it and leads such parties. He is a social worker and has got employment for about forty Mahadev Kolis during his career. He was once the president of the Adivasi Seva Sangh started by Mahadev Kolis of Mulund.

Naturally, he does not speak of returning to his home village. He sent his wife to the Municipal Maternity Hospital at Mulund for her delivery.

Babu (30), though himself only able to read and write, has a son of his elder brother who is a school teacher in a Thana Local Board's primary school near Ambarnath. The teacher had studied upto the tenth at Thana and has a wife who has passed the Marathi sixth. The teacher was due to appear for the S.S.C. and his wife for the Marathi seventh standard examination. Two of the children of Babu's eldest brother living at his home village of Jamgaon in Akola are schooling there.

At Jamgaon, Babu's mother, his eldest brother, his wife and three children live on the family estate. At Mulund, Babu and his wife live with his elder brother, his wife, and his teacher-nephew and his wife and a child of the elder brother. Babu and his elder brother are employed in the Asbestos Cement Factory each earning Rs. 85/- a month, while Babu's teacher-nephew earns only Rs. 70/- a month. His whole family is accommodated in a tenement for which he pays six rupees as monthly rent. The whole household sends only Rs. 20/- per month to Jamgaon. The women go to Jamgaon for agricultural work during peak periods.

Babu irregularly buys the Marathi Daily *Lokasatta*. All of them, including the teacher, are fond of 'bhajan'. The teacher goes home on many of the holidays. Babu and his brother on retirement desire to return to their home village.

Lakshman (30) schooled at his home village of Gondoshi in Akola is able to read and write. At Mulund, he lives with his wife, two children and a younger brother, while at his home village live his father and mother. Lakshman has been staying in Mulund for the last eight years and earns Rs. 100/- a month as an employee of the Asbestos Cement Factory. He says that he has to send about Rs. 500/- a year to his parents, and yet he has been able to invest about Rs. 400/- in agricultural land at Gondoshi!

Lakshman likes to read newspapers but does not purchase any. He gives milk to his children and wants to educate his son but does not believe in education for girls. Needless to say Lakshman will retire, when the time comes, to his home village.



Narayan (30) of Mudkhel near Bhandardara is schooled enough to be able to read and write. He has been here for the last fifteen years, being employed as a gangman in the Central Railway since 1947. He earns Rs. 85/- a month. He lives here with his wife and his younger brother who is married. At his home village his mother lives with his younger brother's wife and his own daughter (8). His daughter, whom he desires to school upto the end of the primary stage, has begun to go to school. He sends home about Rs. 30/- a month. He has got employment for about ten people. He regularly buys the Marathi Daily *Lokasatta*. He is a disciple of one ascetic Haribaba<sup>5</sup> of Ratangad. He has made pilgrimage with his mother and wife to Kashi, Dwarka and Pandharpur. Taking his provident fund in due time, he desires to go back to his village.

Shivram (27) is schooled upto Marathi third at Vasali in Igatpuri. Shivram contends that his further education was stopped because of poverty. He has been here for more than ten years. He is employed in the Central Railway at Byculla as a gangman. He was married long ago but his wife left him after living with him for about a month. Now there is another woman (25) who has been living with him for the last six or seven months. He has three brothers, all married, living at Vasali. One of them has studied upto second Marathi standard. He seems to have taken his share of the family estate for he says that he, on his own, manages to cultivate his patch of land. He has invested about Rs. 500/- in agricultural land and spent about Rs. 700/- on the common house.

He was given a 'mala' and made a 'malakari' while he was still an infant. Shivram has taken his initiation very seriously. For, he has made pilgrimage to Trimbak, Dehu, Alandi and Pandharpur and says that he does not go to Kashi because his parents could not and did not. He is fond of 'bhajan' and possesses some devotional books generally used by the 'Varakari' sect. He accepted Guru six years back and has renounced fig.

Bhau (25) lives all alone, though married, his wife coming

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5. This discipleship is of a different nature from the acceptance of Guru. Haribaba is a Sadhu living at Ratangad. He is not of the kind of peripatetic Gurus who initiate many Mahadev Kolis and ask them to renounce some fruit at the initiation.

only occasionally. He is from Gondoshi, Akola where live his father, his elder brother and his wife. One child born to him died in infancy. He completed Marathi second standard with the help of a teacher who taught him at Gondoshi at night. He came to Mulund in 1951 at the instance of his paternal cousin and in the Asbestos Cement Factory he is earning at present Rs. 100/- a month. After defraying his personal expenses he has to send the balance to his brother. The brothers are engaged in a litigation about their land for the last five years and much of the money is spent on it.

Bhau is fond of wrestling and possesses a cot. He goes home quite often. He has engaged two of his sister's sons in temporary employment.

Shivram (24) had completed Marathi fourth at his village Padosi. He read upto the second standard English with the help of a graduate relative of his at Mulund.<sup>6</sup> He came to Mulund about six years back, and soon took service with the help of his elder brother who was already in Mulund. In a silk mill at Bhandup he is earning Rs. 125/- a month, out of which he sends home Rs. 30/-. Shivram's father, mother, a young brother and his wife live on the family estate at Padoshi. His elder brother to whom he had come died, and his children are living with Shivram's parents. At Mulund Shivram lives with his wife and an infant daughter. Shivram has a cot and a stove<sup>7</sup> in his house, buys regularly the Marathi Daily *Lokasatta* and visits the cinema almost once a week. His infant daughter is named Prabhavati, a rare name in the community.

Before passing on to the life-stories of the better educated people, many of whom are from Bombay, I should like to point out that one or two life-histories of uneducated Mahadev Kolis from Bombay which I possess conform to the pattern in the Mulund histories.

From Mulund there are two life-histories of people who have passed their Vernacular Final and of one who studied upto the English fifth. In the Bombay lot there are three who have finished their Vernacular Final, two who were due for the S.S.C.,

6. This is the teacher who is now serving at a high school at Satana in Nasik, to whom reference has already been made.

7. Throughout this work, stove means a Primus stove.

two who have passed the S.S.C., one who has passed the First Year Arts examination, one due for Inter Arts and one who is a graduate, B.A. I have already narrated one exciting life-history of an educated Mahadev Koli from rural areas and there are three more in my collection of those who have taken their Vernacular Final.

To begin with the rural area I cannot but start with Bhau, commonly known as Rongte Guruji.

Bhau (46) from Manik Ozar in Akola taluka, Second Year trained, was a primary teacher until he was forced to leave the service for taking part in political activities. Lightning killed his father in 1916. He took his education first in the Rajur school, where he used to walk every day from his home village which is about three miles away, and then by living in the Hostel at Akola where he spent five years from 1923 to 1928. As a teacher, in 1934, he was in charge of the same Hostel. He speaks very highly and lovingly of his mother (90) to whose insistence and tenacity he attributes his education. He was a political prisoner in 1949 in connection with some communist movement. He has resigned from the communist party only recently because of differences of opinion. He went to Delhi in May 1956, to offer satyagraha in the cause of Samyukta Maharashtra.

He was married in 1934 but his wife deserted him after three years. He got married again in 1939 but his second wife, too, left him in 1946. His third enterprise in 1952 also met with a failure. Having had no issue from any of the wives, he lives with his mother and a son of her brother in a farm house which he has recently constructed on the outskirts of the village. He utilises his old house in the village for storing grain.

His mother is a 'malakari'. Bhau was given a 'mala' when he was a child but discarded it when he became a communist. He is an expert in herbal medicines and helps those in need in the villages nearby. Chambhars and similar other castes freely move in his house and draw water at his private well. He is a good speaker and possesses books on Ayurvedic system of medicine and on astrology. His living is very simple. He keeps poultry and has a couple of cupboards, a mirror and a cot. He has an insurance policy for a thousand rupees. Since leaving

service, he has engaged himself in agriculture experimenting with all sorts of progressive methods.

Ganpat (32), having passed the Vernacular Final examination, has been employed for the last twelve years. In police service he is earning altogether Rs. 75/- a month. He is from Borghar, Ambegaon taluka and was educated in the Hostels of Ambegaon and Ghodegaon. His wife whose new name is Sarasvatibai is a Second Year trained teacher and has been serving for the last eight years. She is earning Rs. 83/- a month. She has also passed the third examination in Hindi and desires to prepare for the S.S.C. The couple has four children whose names are an aspect of the social change that is likely to come about through education in this community. The first son (7), already schooling in the first standard, is named Prakash, and the fourth child, a boy (1), is called Pradipkumar. The two daughters (5, 3) are Vishranti and Praphullata respectively.

Though Sarasvatibai has allowed her personal name Anjani to be changed, she has not taken the surname of her husband's family because she dislikes her husband's surname, Ghode (horse).

Ganpat has a father's brother's widow who manages the family estate at Borghar. He has to incur an expense of about Rs. 150/- a year in that connection. At his home he has to keep a full-time maid servant, generally a Maratha or Mali by caste, to manage the cooking and look after the children.

Ganpat and his wife give their children milk, biscuits, 'kande-pohe' or 'shira'. Their own diet is mainly rice, 'jwari' or 'bajri' with the addition of non-vegetarian items thrice a week. They have a stove in the house and had an old gramophone for some time which they disposed of. Talcum powder is used for the children. Ganpat's wife prepares 'ladu', 'jilbi', 'gulabjam', and 'karanji' at home.

Ganpat says that he has good friends among his co-employees, prominent among them being a Shimpi and a Maratha. He is very fond of cinema and hardly misses a new film. Yet he is positive that, after retirement, he will return to his home village and engage in agriculture and, if possible, carry on some trade. He has an insurance policy of Rs. 1,000/- and both of

them have a provident fund. This will provide for him the working capital.

Sarasvatibai has two female friends, a Brahmin and a Maratha Christian. Sarasvatibi goes to cinema very rarely. Though she knows embroidery etc. she has no time for it.

Both of them are fond of reading newspapers and they buy the *Daily Sakal*. There are pictures of Datta and Lakshmi in their house and they do Datta worship every Thursday as is the custom amongst higher castes in Maharashtra. Sarasvatibai carries out vows to Shitaladevi and other deities. They have a desire to visit Shirdi, the place of Saibaba, and also Pandharpur.

Evidently they have not only discussed between themselves the problem of birth-control for themselves but have also arrived at a decision which they intend to carry out in the near future. They have concluded that an operation is the only solution to their problem. After discussing the pros and cons between them, the wife has ultimately agreed to the plan that the husband should have the simple operation performed on him.

Dattu (26) passed his fourth Marathi standard from a Poona school, did his fifth at Ambegaon and completed his Marathi course and took his Vernacular Final examination in 1944 through the Ghodegaon Hostel. He was married in 1953 and his wife is educated upto the Marathi fifth. She took her schooling through the Backward Class Female Hostel at Abhone. Dattu's father had a watch-repairer's shop at Poona since 1929. Dattu going there after his Vernacular Final managed to complete his English education of the first three standards in one year in the Modern High School. Then he worked as an apprentice for two years in the workshop of the Engineering College. Thereafter he worked there on daily wages in the same line for about a year. In 1948 his father's failing health necessitated Dattu's joining him in his work. Since his father's death in 1949 he has been carrying on the business himself. He says that he earns Rs. 200/- to Rs. 250/- a month, and he is satisfied because of the freedom he has in addition.

Dattu has two elder brothers. The eldest runs a fruit shop at Grant Road in Bombay. Second, the gentleman who is referred to as the son-in-law of Kawji whose life-history has already been narrated, is a clerk in a military establishment.

Dattu was married in 1953 and has a son less than eighteen months old. He gives milk to his child but not biscuits, nor does his wife use powder or other cosmetic either for her or for her child. In their diet, non-vegetarian items figure every other day. His wife knows agricultural work but Dattu does not know it.

Formerly he was doing wrestling at Ghodegaon but now does the usual exercise at home and goes to the Parvati hill. He visits the cinema once or twice a month. He has travelled to Bhor, Bhimashankar, Dhule, Malegaon and Bombay. He buys the Marathi Daily *Sakal* and uses a stove in his home.

Dattu, who has some money in the savings bank, is an illustration of one aspect of dynamics—the modern technological one—of Mahadev Koli life. He is not enamoured of social work, though he appreciates very much the role of education as an ameliorative factor for his community. He says that his father had very unpleasant experience as a social worker in the Mahadev Koli community. He, therefore, discharges his duty by contributing Rs. 10/- or Rs. 12/- a month towards the payment of fees of Mahadev Koli students who approach him. He wants to teach his children as much as they would like. He is positive that education should not cease with the Vernacular Final or even with the S.S.C.; and he believes that the State should make it possible for students to take as much education as they are capable of. He also thinks that it is the business of Government to help farmers to improve their agriculture. He is very much impressed by the trading capability of the Sindhi people whom he saw round about Poona. As he says, it is possible to start business with a very small capital and he would like Mahadev Kolis to do so. He himself has a number of friends in Poona in his business fraternity. He, therefore, does not want to return to his village but stay on in Poona. He is convinced that one should not have more than three children. How he is going to manage that himself is not decided or disclosed.

Chimaji (44) and his wife Bhagirathibai (34) are one of the half-a-dozen couples among Mahadev Kolis who are teachers. And they are one of the two who are both fully trained primary teachers. And among them, too, this couple stands out because both of them possess a number of other teaching quali-

fications. Bhagirathibai not only possesses a proficiency certificate in knitting and the Hindi diploma of Prabodh, but is also a trained Girl Guide. Chimaji himself is not only a Scout Master but is also a gymnastics teacher with a three-month course certificate and has studied English upto the fourth standard. He has also studied in the Basic School at Dhule upto the third year agriculture. He knows carpentry too.

The strivings and experineces of Chimaji in the pursuit of education and economic amelioration are very interesting and instructive. After his Vernacular Final, Chimaji with the encouragement and active help of the Brahmin Superintendent of the Hostel, Vinayak Ganesh Ketkar, studied upto the third English standard. Thereafter he went to Bombay with the desire of studying further in a night school, carrying on some occupation during daytime. In this endeavour he tried to work as a day labourer, sold mangoes but found it impossible to make both ends meet. Ultimately he decided to go in as an actor of female part in the dramatic troupe of Keshavrao Bhosle's Lalitkala Dramatic Company. Some one met him at Kalyan station while he was travelling with the troupe, and in the conversation that followed the stranger impressed upon him that acting a female part would ruin him for life. Chimaji got horrified and straight bolted home. Then he applied for a scholarship, got it and completed his education.

His father lives at his village and also his two younger brothers and their wives. All of them live separated. Both the brothers have studied upto the Marathi sixth and one of them is the 'sarpanch' (chairman) of the village panchayat. Their children are small and have just begun to go to school. His youngest brother with his wife is another of the six teacher couples, and he lives at Ghodegaon separately. Chimaji's wife comes from an educated family, her elder brother having been a clerk in the Co-operative Bank of Junnar. Bhagirathi did her Vernacular Final living with him. One brother of hers is an agricultural labourer at Junnar and another brother with his wife lives on the family estate at Mhaigsaon. They are not educated.

Their marriage took place in 1938, after she completed this course. She did her other education thereafter. Between them they are at present earning Rs. 188/- a month. They have six

children, two sons and four daughters. One daughter (17) is married and having passed the Vernacular Final is studying in the Training College. Two other daughters (13, 11) are studying in the seventh and sixth Marathi respectively. Their fourth daughter, though only four years old, goes to school. Their eldest son, having passed the S.S.C. and having secured an employment in the Employment Exchange in Bombay, is side by side studying in a college. Their youngest son is only eight months old. The names of the children are typical of the new era. The daughters are Malati, Sashikala, Mandakini and Sudha and one son is Prabhakar. Cosmetics are not much used. Bhagirathi works on the sewing machine, does knitting work, and also draws pictures. They use a stove. There is no cook but Bhagirathi does the cooking and Chimaji helps. Children are given milk. Chimaji drinks tea but Bhagirathi does not. He does not eat betel-leaf nor does he smoke. They do not subscribe to any newspapers and periodicals because they get them from the school library. They are Shankar-worshippers.

Though Chimaji has decided to settle at Ghodegaon where he is serving, he has bought land worth about Rs. 2,500/- at his home village, Gorhe. It is about forty-five acres of 'mal-jamin' (inferior upland area), and, he has to pay an annual revenue tax of Rs. 27/-. He educated and secured employment for his sister's son.

His friends are mostly teachers who were his co-students at school and college. One is a Sali, another is a Mali, a third is a Maratha, and a fourth his own casteman. Bhagirathibai's friends, too, are female teachers who were her co-students. They are a Mali working at Mundhava near Poona, another a Maratha at Narayangan, a third a Christian from Dhond and a fourth, a Maratha from Talegaon Dabhade. Bhagirathibai occasionally corresponds with them and even meets them.

Mahadev (34), Chimaji's younger brother and his wife Sakhubai (26) are the other pair who are working as primary teachers at the same place, namely Ghodegaon. They, too, have additional qualifications though not so varied as those of the preceding couple. This is his second wife whom he married in 1947, the year in which she appeared for the Marathi seventh standard examination. Her further education was completed



at Junnar where her father was a Forest Guard. Between them they earn Rs. 157/- a month. It is he who sends about Rs. 50/- to his old father at Gorhe, where he has bought an acre of land for Rs. 350/-. His brothers look after it. Mahadev has four children. His eldest daughter (13), child of his first wife, having passed the fourth Marathi standard, is already betrothed and has discontinued further education "owing to household difficulties." I am inclined to believe that these difficulties stem from the step-mother. He has three other children, two sons and one daughter.

In his household, cosmetics are used. The names of his children are: daughters, Vatsala and Sarasvati; sons, Shantaram and Vishvas. There is neither a sewing machine nor a stove. Mahadev is anxious to see that he buys enough land at Gorhe before he retires. He wants to devote himself to agriculture there. He says, "It is a meritorious man alone who breathes his last at his home village."

Their friends are from among teachers. Sakhubai corresponds with her Mahar friend from Junnar and with a Christian friend. Occasionally they meet, too.

Mahadev says that his family deities are Mahalaxmi of Vade in Khed and Bhairavnath of Abirkhind in Ahmednagar. He has paid his respects to Mahalaxmi in person but has not been able to do so to Bhairavnath.

Santu (25) and his wife Shevantibai are another teacher couple, the husband being a fully trained teacher and the wife only a Vernacular Final. Santu did his fourth Marathi at his mother's brother's place at Shenit and his Vernacular Final through Akola Hostel. He got employment as a teacher in 1948. He seems to have completed his teacher's training between this time and 1950 when he got married. He has done some course in agriculture and taken some Hindi examinations. He desires to qualify himself as a Hindi teacher and to take the S.S.C. Shevantibai is the brother's daughter of the famous Mahadev Koli leader Rongte Guruji whose life is already given. She did her education upto the sixth living at home and attending the school at Rajur, and for the Final entered the Akola Hostel. At the time of enquiry she was due to enter a Training College.

Santu and his wife serve at Rajur. At Chinchavadi, his home village, Santu has no one now, his step-mother having recently died. They have a daughter (5) who is named Suman. Santu's step-mother came for the delivery of his wife and was managing the household. Shevantibai does the cooking. They have unleavened bread for the morning meal and rice for the evening meal. They give milk to their daughter. They are not vegetarian. They have a stove; they do not use cosmetics. They read newspapers and magazines like *Gavkari*, *Sandesh*, *Sakal*, *Kirloskar*, *Stree*, *Chitramayajagat*.

Santu has two Brahmin friends and half-a-dozen others, and he corresponds with some of them. Shevantibai has a Brahmin and a Maratha friend, both primary teachers, but she is hardly in correspondence with them. The couple is fond of 'bhajan' and are disciples of Saibaba of Shirdi where they once had been.

Santu is a staunch believer in birth-control and even carries on propaganda in its favour.

Vitthal (26) of Gorhe and his wife Chhabhi (21) of Chikhli in Ambegaon are another teacher couple. Vitthal took his education at his village and then through the Hostels at Ambegaon and Ghodegaon. Having taken his Vernacular Final from there with high credit he immediately became a teacher. Thereafter he completed his training course. He passed Hindi Prabodh examination and now desires to take the S.S.C. He knows some carpentry, too. He married Chhabhi in 1949 when she had just passed her Vernacular Final Examination. Immediately after, she took employment as a teacher. She, too, has taken the Hindi Prabodh examination. And she was studying at the Training College at Poona. They have one son (4) named Pratap. Vitthal has two brothers; one (14) having done the Marathi second manages the family estate at Gorhe. His other brother Vishvas (9) is schooling with him and is in Marathi second. His wife's father is a retired Faujdar, his wife's elder sister is Anjani, the lady, as stated elsewhere, who has not taken her husband's surname. Vitthal's wife's brother has done his Inter Arts and lives at his village Chikhli doing social work.

Between them they earn Rs. 145/- a month out of which they send some to Vitthal's brother at home.

They are non-vegetarians and Vitthal, being fond of shikar, was trying for a gun licence. He plays volley-ball. Vitthal indulges in his fondness for 'bhajan' only when he goes to his village. Their maid-servant is Maratha by caste.

The couple practises birth-control, by what method I do not know. Vitthal is convinced of the need for birth-control propaganda in his community.

Among the better educated Mahadev Kolis of urban area Nana of Mulund (50) deserves the place of pride though his education stops with unofficial English fifth standard. Unofficial because Nana did all his education privately after he got employed as an office-boy at Kalyan in 1919 and never once appeared for any examination. For about twenty years now he is serving as a clerk. For the last twelve years he is a telephone clerk at Vadi Bunder and earns at present Rs. 110/- a month.

His family estate at Rajur is looked after by his brother's sons. One of them has studied upto the fifth Marathi. He lives with his wife, one son and four daughters. His son is studying in the ninth standard at Thana. One daughter has passed the Vernacular Final and is waiting to get married; two daughters are studying in Marathi third, and one is too small for schooling. The son is named Manohar and three of the daughters are Sushila, Suman and Vatsala. His son desires to be a graduate.

Nana is very well connected. His wife's brother is one of the three Mamlatdars in the community. His wife can read and write. He buys the Daily *Lokasatta*. Nana and his wife are non-vegetarians and their family deity is Shankar. Nana is fond of 'bhajan'.

Nana is the most successful small capitalist of this community. For though Kawji has perhaps done better yet his line is a natural and familiar one to the community, while Nana has done extremely well in an urban surrounding in a thoroughly urban commercial activity. In 1940 he bought a small plot in Mulund. In 1950 he built chawls on it. To-day he is receiving a rent of about Rs. 450/- a month, which is four times his salary. Yet the Mahadev Koli in him urges Nana to assert very

emphatically that he is going to return to his home village after retirement.

Budha (24) was due to appear for S.S.C. He comes from Palsunde near Satewadi. As the teachers of Satewadi school, which was as distant to him as the Palsunde school, were better known, he completed his fourth standard from the Satewadi school. From there he entered Kotul Hostel which was then under private management. The students in the Hostel had therefore to pay for their food and living. At present this Hostel is under Sarvodaya management and as such it pays for the food and lodging of the students. He passed the Vernacular Final from there. Thereafter for a year he studied in the Shetkari Boarding, hostel for farmers, at Sangamner, again at his own cost. From there he went to one of the Nasik Hostels and there studied upto the S.S.C. But having failed in the High School examination, he came to Bombay a year ago and took employment as a postman.

Budha is at present earning Rs. 98-0 a month. At his home village live his parents, four elder brothers and three younger brothers, and one sister. Two of his younger brothers are taking education, one in the seventh and the other in the fourth. The brother in the seventh is in the Kotul Hostel.

Budha had almost had his education cut short when an elder brother of his who was looking after the sheep of the family died as a result of serpent-bite—his death from serpent-bite is the second on my record—but as Budha's teachers had spoken about him as a clever boy, as soon as Budha's younger brother who had shown no aptitude for education was sufficiently grown, Budha's father putting this boy after the sheep diverted Budha to his education. Budha who got service through the Employment Exchange sent home more than Rs. 500/- last year. Though his elder brother and even younger brother are married, Budha is still unmarried.

One special feature of Bombay urbanity, not commonly met with in the urban conditions of Mulund, is revealed in the case-history of Budha. Budha and four or five other Mahadev Kolis board with a Mahadev Koli at Parel as his paying guests.

Balu (23), another non-matric, has been employed for about a year and was to have appeared for his S.S.C. But he is not

new to Bombay. His brother has been in Bombay for the last fifteen years, being employed as a peon in the Port Trust since 1944. His brother can read and write and his wife's brother has passed the Vernacular Final examination. The brother earns Rs. 80/- a month, while Balu earns Rs. 102/- a month. Balu is a product of Ghodegaon Hostel.

Balu and his brother come from Pimpurwadi, Junnar taluka, where their parents live. In Bombay Balu lives with his brother in a place for which he has to pay a monthly rent of Rs. 20/-. Both of them are married, but have no children. Balu's wife is named Lilavati and Balu's brother's Sulochana, both modern names. Balu's wife is educated upto the Marathi sixth.

They occasionally buy newspapers. Balu's brother has invested about Rs. 2,000/- in his house at his home village. His original house was a thatched one and now he has turned it into a well-built tiled house. Balu's friends are a Marwadi and a Brahmin, both from Junnar. The wives of both brothers do embroidery and knitting and are ignorant of agricultural work.

Vitthal (22) just passed his S.S.C. and has taken service through the Employment Exchange in the All-India Radio on Rs. 130/- a month.

He comes from Devale in Junnar. After his fourth Marathi, Vitthal lived with a family friend at Junnar, a barber by caste. His fees were being paid through his scholarship. At his village live his parents, one elder brother and two younger ones. Both his father and two of his brothers have studied upto the Marathi fourth. His youngest brother is schooling in the third. Two of his brothers are married, and they also live there. They have no children.

In Bombay, too, Vitthal lives with the same barber friend of the family. Vitthal's is a fairly well-to-do family and may be taken as a typical representative of the dynamics in Mahadev Koli life among well-to-do families. It combines the carrying on of ancestral agriculture, as yet more or less in the same form, with prospecting for educated urban employment for one or more of the sons of the family.

Vitthal's father is a vegetarian but Vitthal himself is non-vegetarian. He knows all agricultural work, is fond of 'bhajan'

and is one of the few Mahadev Kolis who can play on the harmonium.

Revji (20) who was due to take his First Year Arts examination hails from Karandi in Akola. After his primary fourth he took part of his further education through the Akola Hostel. For his high school education he went to Sangamner where three or four Mahadev Koli boys rented a room and cooked their food and lived on their own. At present one of his brothers and two of his father's brother's sons are educating in the Kotul Hostel.

At his home village live his father and mother and two younger brothers, his father's brother and his children. One of his younger brothers looks after the cattle. In Bombay he lives with his father's father's brother's son. He got his employment through the Employment Exchange. He earns Rs. 130/- a month of which he sends home Rs. 50/-.

Revji knows all kind of agricultural work, he is fond of the cinema and yet he is not averse to 'bhajan'. He has once been to Jejuri, Khandoba of that place being his family deity. Revji desires to complete his Arts course and get an honours degree and would like to carry on propaganda in the community for education.

Vitthal (21) of Maveshi in Akola is studying in the Inter Arts and comes from a traditional joint family. At his home village live his father's father and mother, his father and mother, and one brother of his father. A brother of his father is a primary teacher at Varanghusi in Akola. Another is a Forest Beat Guard at Samsherpur in the same taluka. His father's brothers were educated through the Akola Hostel. The wife of his teacher uncle is educated upto the fourth Marathi. The Beat Guard's son (10) lives with Vitthal in Bombay and studies in the fifth. His mother's brother's daughter also lives with him, runs the household for him and studies in the eighth standard. Vitthal has married only recently. One of his father's brother's daughter's husband is also a primary teacher at Sangamner.

In Bombay, Vitthal first lived in the Borivli Hostel of the Adivasi Seva Mandal. But as he could not work as a night employee anywhere while living in the Hostel, he left it and took

employment and engaged a room at Vasai for Rs. 14/- a month. He earns Rs. 130/- a month.

Vitthal in his own way has been helping Mahadev Koli boys to take education or to get employment through the Employment Exchange.

In the school and in the college, Vitthal won medals in various sports items. He has a Koli and a Brahmin friends and buys the Marathi Daily *Lokasatta* regularly.

Vitthal represents the second stage of dynamics that education introduces. For, he desires to start a high school at Rajur. It is a fairly central place in Akola taluka and well situated for a large concentration of Mahadev Kolis in that taluka. Maveshi, the home village of Vitthal, is only three miles west of Rajur.

Shankar Babaji Sable (23), whose is the last case-history, is the most highly educated Mahadev Koli on my record.

He is an Honours second class B.A. from Wadia College, Poona, and was an inmate of the Backward Classes Hostel.

Shankar's father was in the police service and was working in Poona till 1949.

Shankar comes from Rajewadi in Ambegaon where now live his parents and his three younger brothers (19,13,4). The first two have studied upto the Marathi first or second. They are named Anant, Mohan and Raghunath. Mohan is a short form of Mohiniraj, a name suggested by a Brahmin neighbour.

Shankar is an officer and earns Rs. 245/- a month. He is not quite sure what particular employment he will finally settle down to but he has no mind to prosecute further studies.

In Bombay he lives with a distant uncle, buys the *Free Press Journal*, three or four Weeklies, one of them being *Screen*. He frequently goes to his home village and to Poona. He has a Brahmin college-friend and his friendship extends further to some Chambhar and Mahar boys who were his co-students at the Hostel.

Shankar's is a case, it would appear, of very modern reactions. He says he is undecided about his future and even vouchsafes the information that his views are a jumble.

The case-histories selected for narration above represent about 40 per cent of the total in my collection. They include almost all those of educated Mahadev Kolis. Of the urban occupations generally taken up by the Mahadev Kolis, they are mostly representative, railway labour and non-textile factory work being the most favoured occupations among them. Of course, as is clear from the case-histories, this is an accident due to particular facilities of entrance and not a choice. Small trading whether in the urban or the rural areas has not yet drawn to it any significant number of the members of this community. In the three of four rural areas carefully investigated, I am assured, there are very few Mahadev Kolis running even small shops though it is a region of their concentration.

The main trading activity in the rural areas is a fairly old one to which the Mahadev Koli seems to be accustomed for unknown length of time. It is trade in cattle. The region round about Ambegaon, Igatpuri, and Akola in particular, has been known for fine bullocks, called the Dangi breed. This fine looking cattle is prized by agriculturists and fancied by cart drivers. This breed cannot be raised in the Konkan or even in the eastern plateau areas, though when bred in the Dangs, that is the western parts of Igatpuri and Akola talukas, they work well in those areas. I am happy to note that the Mahadev Koli is prepared to change his age-old methods. Government agency has latterly made it possible to increase the breeding capacity of this fine cattle by means of artificial insemination and the Mahadev Kolis have shown willingness to avail themselves of the new method. The Mahadev Koli, thus, has been, by circumstances which he has utilized, a breeder of these Dangi bulls and a trader in them. The traditional centre for his trading activities is Mhase in the Murbad taluka of Thana district. The annual fair there, held in early January and lasting for two weeks from the full moon day of the lunar month of Paush, is accompanied by cattle transactions on a large scale. It is mostly Mahadev Kolis and others who bring the cattle from their region east of the Sahyadri hills and sell them to farmers and others from the Konkan. This trading activity naturally extends into the trade of milk products. In Akola, Rajur, there are a few shops run by the Mahadev Kolis selling sweets mainly, consisting of milk products. In the town-like areas and sometimes by the wayside and more



particularly at pilgrimages and 'jatras', popular festival shows, a few Mahadev Kolis are seen operating tea-shops.

Another commercial activity, but one which combines both manual labour and artisanship and is a co-operative operation is the sinking of wells. There are always some persons well known for their skill in blasting operations which are necessary in sinking any well in these areas. They take contracts and organise a troupe of their own and carry out the operation. The scope for this activity, as will be easily appreciated, is very limited.

The life-histories have shown that, not only when schooled but also by observation and imitation, the Mahadev Kolis are capable of artisan occupations like that of a carpenter. Apart from doing a little carpentry work on their houses, some of them also do that work—and some of it very delicate and fine carving—for others as a subsidiary occupation.

One new activity which the Mahadev Kolis bid fair to resort to, but which is not represented in my collection of case-histories, is that of coal-making. For the last few years, two or three parties in the western area of Akola have been in association with some Thakurs and Katkaris, the latter being *par excellence* the charcoal-makers of Bombay State, and have begun to manufacture charcoal out of the jungle wood. From the talks of people it appeared that their example would prove catching.

As against this development, the 'tamasha' activity—semi-literary, semi-dramatic—of theirs is slightly on the decrease; for, some of the potential 'tamasha' actors and organisers are going through the educational avenue to better occupations, and the public demand for it is weakening.

The educational avenue as is seen from the case-histories has led mostly to the primary teachers' world, and rather sparingly to clerkships and better officers' positions. In 1954, of the 3,037 primary teachers in the employ of the Poona District Local Board, 98 were Mahadev Kolis, 44 of them being fully trained.

Rongte Guruji's case-history demonstrates the rarity of ag-

ricultural experiments. His success is cultivating paddy with the Japanese method there should further the cause of such experiments. Though Rongte Guruji undertook these experiments at the instance of the Government agency, there are not many Mahadv Kolis in this area who can be persuaded to or who can afford to take to such experiments.

The only other experiment in my record is from Devargaon where a Mahadev Koli farmer had been raising green vegetables. The farmer died in a cart accident and, there being nobody to look after the garden after him, it has decayed.

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## Appendix A

*Mahadev Koli surnames not included in Statements IV and V*  
(Pp. 97-105).

Ambavane, Ambekar, Ambere, Ande, Avhad, Bade, Bagad, Bamere, Baramade, Bendari, Bhaik, Bhavale, Bhise, Bhodak, Bhogade, Bhoi, Bhokate, Bhomod, Bhopale, Binar, Bodake, Bokad, Bombale, Burang, Burunge, Burase, Chikhale, Chirake, Dagade, Damale, Datakhile, Davale, Dhondabhare, Dhonge, DhumaI, Dive, Dolas, Game, Gandekar, Gangbhoir, Ganjave, Gavate, Chatkar, Ghige, Ghine, Ghone, Ghonge, Ghote, Ghute, Girange, Gobate, Gulambe, Gund, Hajare, Hande, Hembade, Ide, Jadhar, Jakhere, Javale, Jhambade, Jhole, Jhombad, Jhurande, Karabhar, Karake, Karatule, Karote, Kashke, Kavadare, Kavara, Kaveru, Kede, Kekare, Khamase, Khamkar, Kilabile, Kondavale, Kondhavade, Kothé, Ladake, Lilake, Lokhande, Malhari, Mandave, Mangate, Mange, Masale, Mate, Mohandule, Mohare, Moher, Mormare, Munje, Nadage, Nalvade, Nande, Nandkar, Navale, Nirmal, Nisal, Nisarad, Padhar, Pagi, Pandhare, Parate, Pavade, Pavar, Pavase, Pedekar, Pere, Phadale, Phalake, Podhe, Pophale, Potinde, Potkule, Ragade, Raksha, Rashana, Raul, Ravate, Rengate, Sangathe, Saragade, Satapute, Shegale, Shengale, Shevade, Tendale, Tarade, Taral, Tare, Vagale, Vaktha, Valagade, Valekar, Valkar, Vatane, Vayakoli, Thuval, Tokare, Tongare, Tongire, Ugare, Undare, Urande, Vele, Vunde, Yele.

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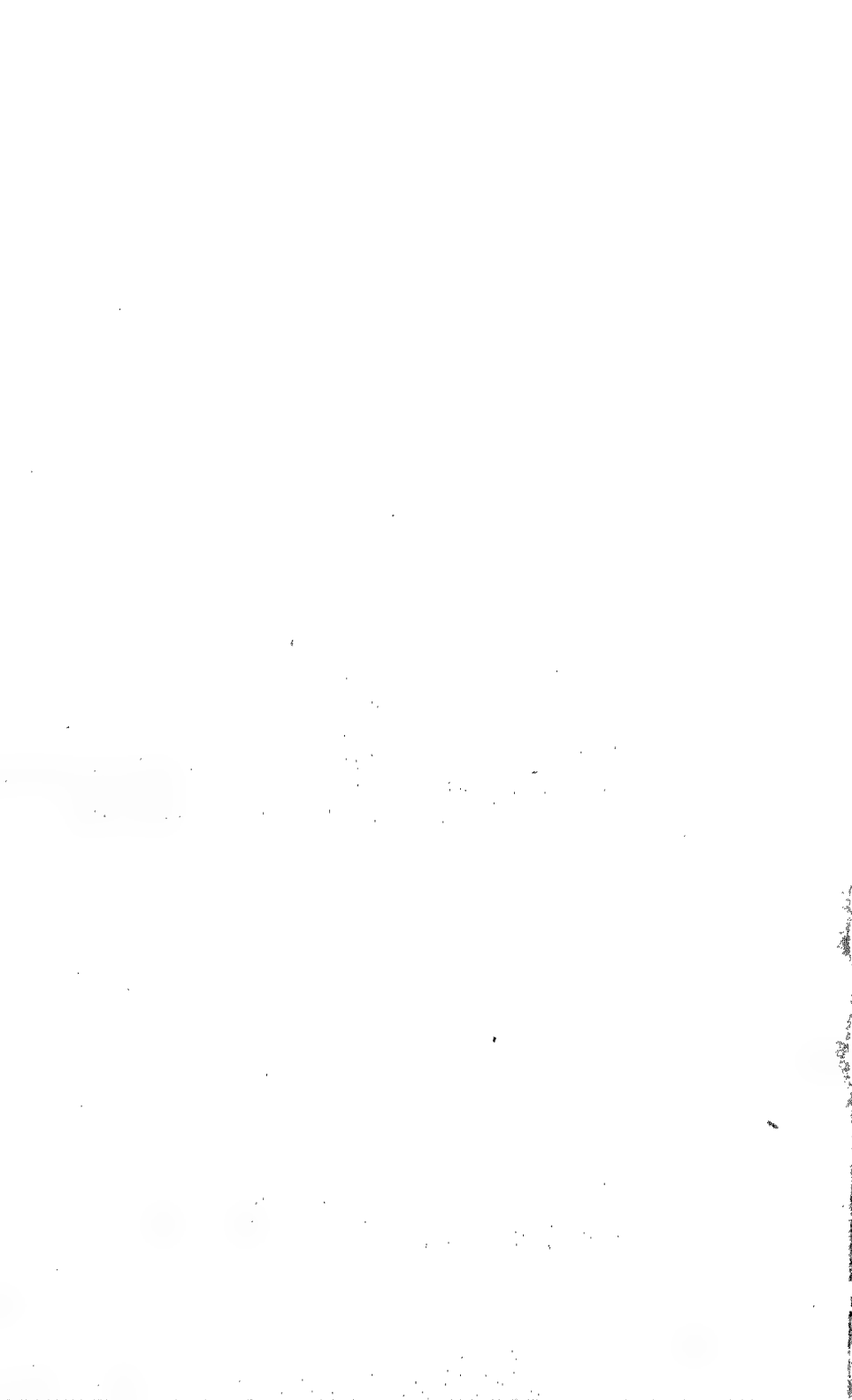
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1	4	Guparat	Gujarat
1	8	regioni	regions
1	17	etnic	ethnic
2	6	oday	today
3	24	distingguish	distinguish
4	6	Mahadey	Mahadev
6	34	Within the overall Koli	Within the overall Koli
7	1	group what Maharashtra cannot	group what is the pre- cise relation of the Kolis of Maharashtra cannot
7	6	cinoponent	component
7	11	much signification	the signification
7	16	of	or
9	2	Panchvti	Panchavati
9	33	regin	region
11	5	1959	1559
11	13	1637	1657
15	22	Truely	Truly
19	13	six other families, are located in Chambhers and	six other families, three of Chambhars and
20	2	shelad	Shelad
20	16	are fairly represented	are fairly represented,
20	24	hard put to it,	hard put to it
21	18	Konkans	Konknas
21	26	place	piece
22	10	wold	would
22	28	agriculturist	agriculturists
23	29	milmaids	milkmaids
24	9	on	no
24	12	fac	fact
24	16	two-sloped of dupakhi'	two-sloped or 'dupakhi'
24	19	houses,	houses

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Incorrect</i>	<i>Correct</i>
24	20	house with cor	house with cor-
25	4	Hahadev	Mahadev
26	26	family	families
27	6	alltitude	altitude
27	18	road-lobour	road-labour
28	12	coan	corn
29	2	based on th estudy	based on the study
31	17	Mahadex	Mahadev
33	31	waist-broken'.	'waist-broken'.
34	19	against lice. to	against lice. To
34	30	aho	are
35	6	liv in it.	live in it.
35	26	for he	for the
35	31	about he	about the
35	40	hardy	hardly
36	25	to call her its name	to call her by its name
36	32	forshadows	foreshadows
38	8	egency	agency
38	47	red-like	reed-like
42	9	I tis	It is
42	13	years, he old	years, the old
43	6	stuck	struck
44	29	Jambhore, bout	Jambhore, about
45	4	and here	and there
45	26	stans	stands
46	3	tempe	temple
46	73	spitit-godlings,	spirit-godlings
50	38	affeced	affected
51	13	enranced	entranced
51	21	rescribed	described
51	37	grand	grand-
52	25	The sacrifices followed	The sacrifices are followed
53	17	or	for
54	26	sclipse	eclipse
56	5	is	its
56	16	veledictory	valedictory
56	28	'puranpoli' is	'puranpoli' is
58	20	down	town

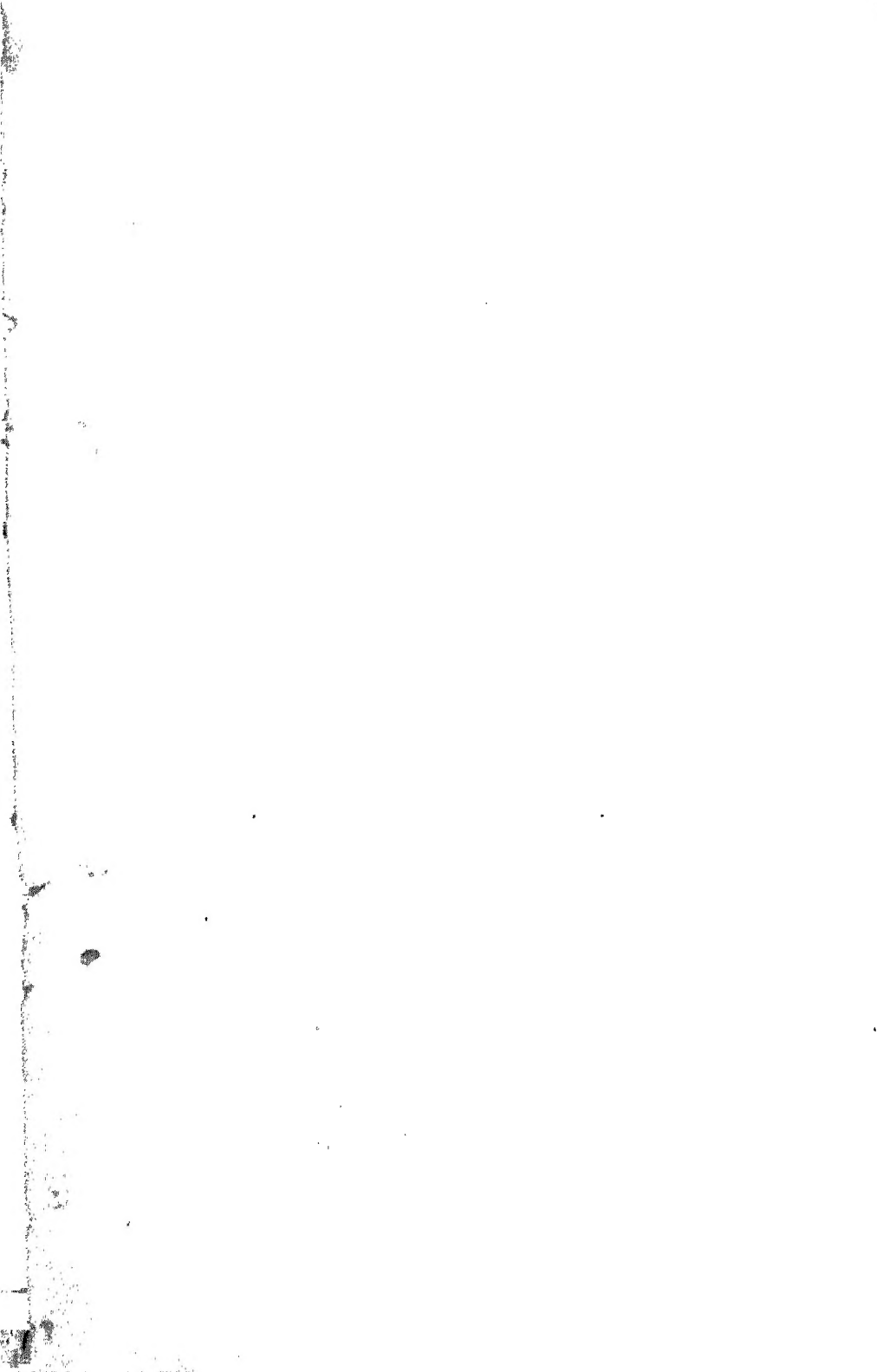
<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Incorrect</i>	<i>Correct</i>
59	3	Shixram	Shivram
62	11	price of the	price the
72	4	that	the
75	17	pavli'	palvi
75	36	cinvinced	convinced
88	13	assigns	consigns
91	29	one for the village	one for that of village
		Shirpunje	Shirpunje
94	3	snch	such
95	4	sometimes	sometime
102	24	Nimgari	Nimgiri
111	39	one third	one-third
114	37	lion	ion
117	27	persuaded from the	persuaded the
119	31	'vane'	'vade'
122	19	which the the family	which the family
123	17	some	one
124	18	met	wet
124	30	of	at
124	31	coanut,	cocoanut,
125	8	'bhatgat'	'bhagat'
126	1	clans	cians
129	27	In the Konkan and in the north-west	In the Konkan and in north-west
129	31	in the north-west	in north-west
131	1	'shevanti'	'shevanti'.
131	24	root-basket	'root-basket'
132	18	way receives	way and receives
132	19	In the north-west	In north-west
134	19	tnan	than
145	13	leaving.	leaving,
145	19	root-basket	'root-basket'
149	37	polygamous	polygynous
155	16	Nimri	Nimgiri
160	19	thirteen year	thirteen years
160	20	sheep	sheep :
160	21	early	early,
169	24	first wives,	first-wives,

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
175	15	in the urbanised	in urbanised
178	6	He has married	He has been married
178	21	already	already,
179	13	one of the brother's	one brother's
180	27	across single	across a single
202	16	godings	godlings
202	37	gahtered	gathered
205	1	mctls	meals
206	37	ponint	point
207	8	poular	popular
209	6	ths	the
209	6	namng	naming
214	33	struggle for 1935,	struggle of 1935
215	28	of the Bombay	of Bombay
217	27	diserict	district
220	20	disericts	districts
221	32	yeas	years
223	17	owards	towards
225	19	comse	comes
231	20	brother	brothers
232	33	attainment,	attainment and
234	13	Ant	And
240	26	charges	charges.
241	15	nepew	nephew
241	23	them	them,
242	2	to be be able	to be able
246	18	shoulnd	should
257	11	In the three of four	In three of the four
259	1	is	in

(Unfortunately, some major printing errors have found their way in this edition. While preparing the errata, opportunity has been taken to correct even minor slips. Hence the inordinate length of the errata..... PUBLISHERS.)

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